# PLAYS FOR OUR AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

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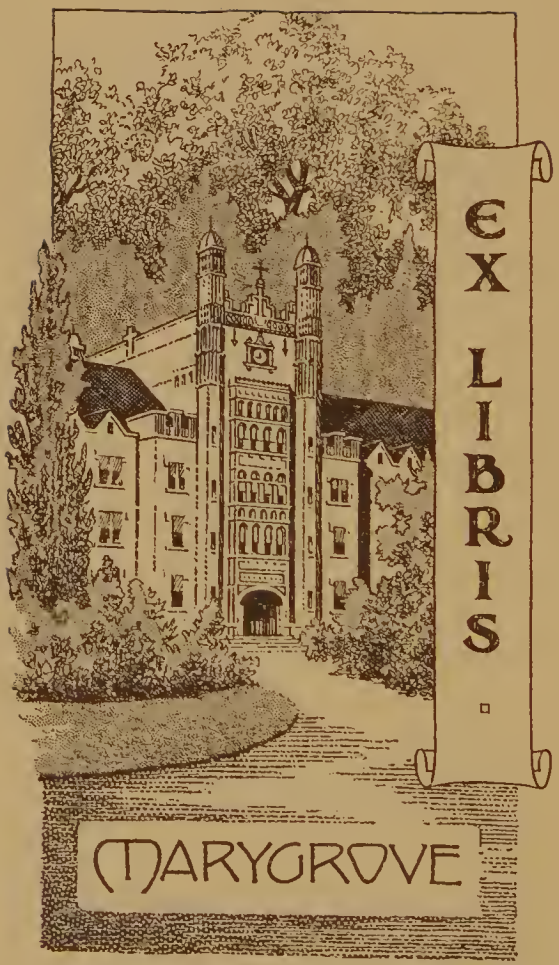
## SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

*Edited by*

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

and A. P. SANFORD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# PLAYS FOR OUR AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

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*Compiled and edited by* ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER and A. P. SANFORD.

1. PLAYS FOR CHRISTMAS AND OTHER HIGH DAYS: including Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter and Halloween.

2. PLAYS FOR FESTIVALS: including New Year's Day, Twelfth Night, Arbor Day, April Fool's Day, May Day, Thanksgiving Day and Forefathers' Day.

3. PLAYS FOR PATRIOTIC DAYS: including Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Flag Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thomas Jefferson Day and Armistice Day.

4. PLAYS FOR SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS: including Mother's Day, Children's Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Health Week, Music Week, Book Week and Red Cross Week.

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# PLAYS FOR OUR AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

*Plays for Special Celebrations:*

*Including Mother's Day, Children's Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Health Week, Music Week, Book Week and Red Cross Week*

* * * *

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

AND

A. P. SANFORD

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The American Junior Red Cross for "Taking the Picnic to the Shut-In."
Ethel Blair Jordan and the American Junior Red Cross, for "What Becomes of It?"
George A. Muse and American National Red Cross, for "A Close Call."

# INTRODUCTION

"Why didn't you put more plays into your series *Our American Holidays?*"

The plaintiff was my friend Miss Eugenia Krauss, Librarian of the Epiphany Branch of the New York Public Library. I pleaded lack of space.

"Then why not bring out some supplementary volumes devoted entirely to drama?"

She drew an arresting picture of the situation in 23rd Street.

"Before each holiday and special celebration we are swamped with clients who clamor for appropriate plays. They must be not too long and not too hackneyed. They must be effective, amusing, interesting, with economical costuming and setting, and fairly easy to act. We hate to do it; but we have to send most of these people away empty-handed. We simply don't know where to turn for material. And the same thing happens at the other branches."

Now, any request from librarians always has my respectful consideration, because librarians are so often right. They are in a position to know what holes in literature need filling up. In Pittsburgh, years ago, a five-minute talk with two of them resulted in the publication of a book of travel and the eleven volumes of *Our American Holidays.* I owe them far more in the way of encouragement, stimulus and practical suggestion than can ever be repaid by the dedication of "The Poetry Cure," by making anthologies to save them steps, or by that essay in appreciation, "The Creative Librarian," on which I have been at work for a decade or so, and mean to bring out some year in "The Atlantic Monthly."

When the ground was surveyed, Miss Krauss proved to

be right. In the existing collections of holiday literature there was found to be a marked shortage of the sort of drama needed by amateurs. For a few occasions like Jefferson's Birthday, and certain of the "Weeks," there seemed to be almost nothing of the kind in print. A good many tired teachers, librarians and settlement workers were, in desperation, turning out emergency plays after their regular work was done.

It is hoped that these volumes may lighten their labors. To meet the direst need, nine plays were specially written for this series. The other selections are almost as fresh; for the great majority of them have been put on paper within the last three years.

A few are by distinguished foreigners. The fact that the writers of the rest hail from all parts of the United States gives these books a quality representatively American. An effort has been made to meet, in every division, the requirements of all ages in schools, colleges, dramatic clubs and other organizations.

The series provides a thing increasingly needed in modern life,—re-creation through laughter. And it has an even more useful aim. It was undertaken in sympathy with the new, concrete type of character-education which is rapidly supplanting the abstract method of obvious didacticism. The latter coldly laid down the law "line upon line and precept upon precept." It sought to improve personality by a frontal barrage of crude moralizing. These volumes would lend practical support to the more scientific method of our own day. This works concretely, yet with far more subtle effectiveness, through the action and passion, the example and the indirect suggestion of the stage. Already it has shown striking results in building better citizens of the home, the school, the college, the town, the nation and the world.

R. H. S.

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# MOTHER'S DAY

# SHIPPING MOTHER EAST *

*A SATIRICAL COMEDY IN ONE ACT*

By

ETHEL VAN DER VEER

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## CHARACTERS

In the order of their first appearance:

GEORGE LARKIN
DOT, *his wife*
LINDA, CONNIE } *married sisters*
MRS. LARKIN, *their mother*
JULIA, *another married sister, daughter to* MRS. LARKIN

# SHIPPING MOTHER EAST

SCENE: *The living-room of a small house in a thriving Mid-western town. The furniture is old and a bit shabby; desk up at the right, with the usual fittings and papers. At the left is a table on which are a small vase and three or four books in public library bindings. At right-center a chair, its front legs held from spreading by a piece of rope. But the room as a whole is pleasing, with its hand-made rag rugs, fresh ruffled curtains at the window, back center, through which may be seen a lilac bush in full bloom. A growing plant or so adds to the general homelike aspect. Doors right and left; that on the left opens into the dining-room, and that on right leads in from entrance hall and also from bedrooms up-stairs.*

*There is no one in the room. A jangling doorbell rings, off right. After the sound has died away, a murmur of voices is heard, also off right. Then* GEORGE *and* DOT *enter, right, followed immediately by* CONNIE. *All have a manner of suppressed excitement, a tiptoeing gait.* CONNIE *carries a small, unhappy-looking bouquet.*

DOT [*to* GEORGE, *as they enter*]. How clever of you, George, to remember about the key.

GEORGE [*to* DOT]. A mere matter of using my intelligence, little wife. [*Calling off into dining-room.*] Mother! Oh, mother! Where are you?

CONNIE. George! [*And when she has his attention.*] How could mother be in—with the key outside under the mat? [DOT *laughs.* CONNIE *goes on.*] And besides, if

we hadn't *known* she'd be at church, we wouldn't be here—not yet, I mean.

GEORGE. Uh-huh! Who rang the bell? [DOT *and* GEORGE *laugh in common.*]

CONNIE [*laying bouquet on table*]. Well, it'll be a wonderful surprise for mother.

DOT. I don't believe she'll like it. George—please sound her out, first—

CONNIE. Not like it! Why, I could hardly wait to tell her.

GEORGE. We had to wait until Mother's Day—didn't we?

DOT. But you didn't have to wait until Mother's Day to come and see her, did you? [*She looks from* GEORGE *to* CONNIE.]

CONNIE. Don't be funny, Dot. Mother knows perfectly well how many demands there are on my time. And if she's been complaining to you—

DOT. Not complaining—just explaining—making excuses for you and Linda and Julia—and George—

CONNIE. Well, I like that! Excuses! I suppose you call being treasurer of the Ladies' Aid an excuse! Why, every one tells me how much good I'm doing in the world, and they think my devotion to mother is *beautiful*—even the minister—

DOT. Yes, you talk about her a lot—

GEORGE. Now, now, girls—

CONNIE. I'm here every *minute* I can be. It's different with Linda, she's got nothing to do but— [LINDA *appears in doorway, right.*]

LINDA [*coming in*]. Of course, *I* have *nothing* at *all* to do. What with spring cleaning and eighteen pairs of white curtains to—

GEORGE. To do up before every party—ha, ha!

LINDA. How many weeks since you were here last, George?

GEORGE. Ahem! Well, Dot's been here right along,

and the boy too. And anyway, I haven't neglected mother. Who attended to all the legal details of our plans, and the transportation arrangements—

CONNIE. Are you sure there'll be enough money?

DOT. Oh, he has it all figured out—to the very last cent.

GEORGE. Practically, practically. Mother's little income will be just as good in the East as it is in the West. Then with what we can scrape together, and mother's own savings—let's see— [*He goes up right and searches in the desk.*] She used to keep her postal-savings envelope right in this—

DOT. But, George—do you think she'd like your going through her desk?

CONNIE. His own mother's desk? Well, it wouldn't be the first time. How do you suppose he knows where she keeps her—

GEORGE [*stopping his search, then starting it over again*]. Strange! I don't understand it.

LINDA. What's the matter?

GEORGE. Her postal-savings—they're not here.

CONNIE. Not there! You mean they're gone?

DOT [*with a twinkle*]. Perhaps she's spent them.

GEORGE. Spent them? Spent her savings?

LINDA. Likely she'd do that—without consulting us, her own children.

GEORGE. Ah, here it is!

DOT [*amused*]. What a relief! [GEORGE *takes the postal-savings certificates from their envelope and runs through them while* CONNIE *and* LINDA *peer at them from either side.* ALL *nod with satisfaction.*]

GEORGE. Just about what I figured—or very near it. [*He takes a white slip from the envelope.*] Ah! And here's the slip she signed in case anything happened. I'll draw the money for her in the morning—or Dot can do it. [*He replaces the slip and certificates in the envelope, which*

*he puts in an inner pocket.*] Ah! What a day! Mother's Day!

CONNIE [*sentimentally*]. And mother's dream come true. I can hardly believe it, after all these years.

LINDA. But there's something pitiful about it, too, Connie. The poor dear soul—living all the best years of her life stuck away in this inland town, yearning all the time for the sea-coast home of her happy girlhood.

DOT. What makes you think she's been yearning?

LINDA. As if we couldn't see into her heart!

CONNIE. She used to picture the place for us so vividly. Have you never heard her tell about it, Dot?

DOT. Never. She's always talking about her garden—to me. But I've heard you and George sentimentalize over it. [CONNIE *turns her back on* DOT *and takes off her hat.*]

LINDA [*to* DOT]. There's a little far-away seaside cottage where she was born. It's on the rugged rockbound coast of Maine. Oh, she makes you smell the seaweed, feel the tang of the salt breeze on your face and the cold spray on your hands, hear the gentle lull of the lapping waves. And she wants more than anything to go back to it.

GEORGE. Gets you—somehow—doesn't it?

CONNIE. And her longing for the sight of fishing-boats, men drawing in their nets at sundown.

GEORGE. And pulling up their lobster-pots to find them filled with fresh, plump, juicy red lobsters. Think of her—always wanting to go back—longing for the smell of fresh cod. [DOT *gags a little over this thought.*]

DOT. Maybe she's got used to eating canned fish, now. Anyway, I thought people only ate fish for religious reasons.

CONNIE. Don't be silly, Dot. As if we didn't all know what our own mother wanted.

LINDA. And she's been so brave about it. Why, come to think, it's been years since I've heard her even mention the ocean.

DOT. Then how can you be sure she still wants to go back? And the neighbors—she'd miss them so—

CONNIE. But that's just it—the neighbors are always taking advantage of her: to go over and sit with Buster while his mother gads. Up in the middle of the night with steam kettles for the neighbors' babies' croups! [*Severely.*] Well, it's our business to see that it stops.

DOT. But she *likes* to be helpful—I know she does. And now to be bundled up and sent off—

CONNIE. It's been the passion of her life.

DOT. But in that case—

GEORGE. Every time she's saved up for it, something would always interfere. Either babies or—

LINDA. I can remember how pa would promise her the trip, and plans would be laid—

GEORGE [*laughing*]. And then pa would need the money for his business.

CONNIE. Or we'd get the measles—

LINDA [*to* DOT]. Or George must go to camp—

GEORGE [*nettled*]. Or you'd want a new party dress—

LINDA [*ignoring him; to* DOT]. Then it was helping George through college—

GEORGE. And Julia's hand-painting lessons—and your musical education, Linda, don't forget your musical education. [*He snickers.*]

LINDA. You needn't snicker at me! I found out I couldn't sing, and that's more than you have.

GEORGE. I never had any expensive lessons!

LINDA. Well, mother's done more for you than—

CONNIE [*stepping between them*]. Brother! Sister! Don't quarrel. Remember, this is Mother's Day. Remember why we are here.

GEORGE. Why aren't Jim and Julia here? Did you tell Julia?

LINDA. Dot met Jim and she says he's in trouble again, so Julia won't have anything.

GEORGE. That's no reason for their not coming. Let's

get them here anyway, what say, Dot? There's the telephone, right in there. [*He indicates door on left.*]

DOT [*going to window, back center*]. You can see their house from this window. [*She looks out: then craftily.*] But it doesn't look as if they were home.

GEORGE. Well, we're here. Now let's get to work.

CONNIE. Yes—if mother leaves to-morrow noon, there's all the packing— [*She looks about.*] Poor mother! She'll miss having her own furniture. Maybe later—

DOT. Oh, George has thought it all out.

LINDA [*a hand on the rocker*]. This dear old chair—where she used to rock us all to sleep. [*She pats the chair and moves back to look it over.*]

CONNIE. She's always loved that chair.

GEORGE [*coming to right of chair*]. Ha! I've attended to all that. I've a lot of sentiment about that chair, myself. [*He starts toward dining-room, left, and stumbles over the rockers. He smothers an imprecation which whistles through his teeth suspiciously, rubs his shin and limps out into dining-room.*] Ouch!

LINDA. Connie, you do the linen—I'll pack her clothes. [*She runs out to the right.*]

CONNIE. Dot, you gather up the silver. [*She goes out into dining-room.*]

DOT. But why not wait until you find out— [*She finds she is addressing the empty room, so stops.*]

GEORGE [*off, left*]. Gangway! Gangway! [*He drags in* MRS. LARKIN'S *trunk, an aged, outlandish affair. As he comes in:*] There you are! [*He opens the trunk with a flourish.*] Why, it's full of carpet-rags. [*Looking about, he calls loudly.*] Hurry, girls! She's liable to come in any minute, now. Dot, you're not doing anything—

DOT. I'll get the silver. [*She goes leisurely out, left.* GEORGE *circles around the rocker, giving it wide berth, sits in chair, right, and rubs his shin.* LINDA *comes in from the hall, right, her arms heaped with garments which she deposits temporarily on the table.*]

GEORGE. Better hurry—time's flying. [*He lights a cigar and settles himself comfortably.* LINDA *pulls rags out of trunk and throws them on the floor.* CONNIE *comes in from the left, laden with folded linen. She is just in time to drop them into the bottom of the just emptied trunk.* LINDA *gives her a protesting look, but* CONNIE *goes on off to the right, on her way to the bedroom, up-stairs.* LINDA *takes the linen out of the trunk and puts it on the floor.*]

LINDA. There's got to be some system, if we're going to get this packing done. I do hope nothing interferes—this time.

GEORGE. Nothing *can* interfere. Mother's going, by golly, or I'll know the reason why. [DOT *comes in empty-handed.*] Where's the silver?

DOT. It's ready for you to bring in; it's quite heavy.

GEORGE [*smoking*]. Well, we'll leave it till the last.

LINDA. I think the silver ought to go in first—on the bottom—if it's so heavy.

GEORGE. And then when the expressman turns the trunk upside down—

DOT. I thought they always stood them on end.

LINDA. Yes, but which end?

GEORGE. We'll leave it to Connie to decide; she's had to move oftener than the rest of us. [CONNIE *comes in from right, with pile of bed-clothes, lingerie, stockings, shoes, etc.*]

LINDA. Why, Connie, you've stripped the bed! [*She takes the lingerie, etc., from the pile and throws it on the floor near the linen.*] Where's mother going to sleep, to-night?

CONNIE [*dropping the bedclothes*]. She could go to your house—Harry's away to the convention.

LINDA. So's Phil. Why not your house?

CONNIE [*taking books from table and throwing them in the trunk*]. She may want her books—

DOT. Not those—they're library books. Get her Keats

and Tennyson and Amy Lowell—up-stairs in her room, probably. [CONNIE *goes out, left.*]

LINDA [*taking books from trunk and throwing them on floor, then going to table*]. And somebody bring her brush and comb.

GEORGE. She'll need those on the Pullman.

DOT [*at the window*]. She's coming!

LINDA [*taking vase from table and putting it in trunk*]. Who, mother? [CONNIE *comes in from the left with a load of towels.*]

DOT. Yes, she's left the road—she's coming up the path. George—don't bully her into going, if she doesn't want to—find out first if—

GEORGE [*rising*]. Have your contributions ready, girls. [*He looks in his inside pocket and then adjusts his coat.*]

CONNIE. The bouquet! Where's the bouquet? [*She looks in the trunk.*] Linda—did you pack the bouquet?

DOT. I saw it on the table. [LINDA *moves garments on table. Some of them fall to floor.* CONNIE *recovers bouquet, shakes it out and pokes it into shape. Then she and* LINDA *find their hand-bags and take positions.*]

GEORGE. I'll open the door. Now bear in mind, we must break the news gently. [*He goes toward the hall, right,* MRS. LARKIN *enters. She is a sprightly little lady in her sixties, her hair beautifully touched with white.*]

GEORGE [*greeting her effusively and with a resounding smack*]. *God bless you,* little mother!

MRS. LARKIN. Thanks, George. And Connie—and Linda, too! Well, this *is* a treat. Dot, that new fertilizer came yesterday—just after you'd gone. [*She observes the disorder.*] Good heavens! Where was the fire?

CONNIE. It's all right, mother. Don't you know what day this is?

MRS. LARKIN. Why, yes, I know what day it is—it's Sunday.

LINDA. It's Mother's Day!

CONNIE [*presenting the bouquet*]. God bless her!

MRS. LARKIN [*beaming; taking bouquet*]. You dear child—to think of saving this for me. [*Regards the wilted bouquet and sniffs at it.*] Well—I'll put these right in water.

DOT. Put a little ammonia in the water.

MRS. LARKIN [*going to table and looking*]. Why, where's my vase? It's gone.

GEORGE. Not gone, but going—going to Maine, to the beautiful rocky coast of Maine.

MRS. LARKIN. My soul and body, George—what for?

CONNIE. And *you're* going to Maine.

MRS. LARKIN. What in the world—

LINDA. Now don't say a word—it's all settled. [DOT *goes up and stands looking out of the window.*]

GEORGE. Nothing can interfere.

CONNIE. You leave to-morrow noon.

MRS. LARKIN. But I've got four hundred pounds of fertilizer—

GEORGE. I've reserved your berth.

MRS. LARKIN. And I've hired Seth Peabody—

LINDA. We'll explain to Seth.

CONNIE. Isn't it pitiful—she can't believe it.

GEORGE. Listen, mother, and please try to take it in. You're going back to Maine.

MRS. LARKIN. But I'm not—I couldn't—it's out of the question. In the first place, I—I haven't the money.

GEORGE. You've forgotten your postal savings, mother.

MRS. LARKIN. Oh, but that's for a special purpose.

GEORGE. You bet it *is!*

CONNIE. Now aren't you glad we wouldn't let you buy that lawn-sprinkler?

LINDA. And the patent hedge-cutter—

GEORGE. A penny saved is a penny earned—and with what your daughters have brought you—

CONNIE [*with an air of preparing for a ceremony*]. Now sit down, darling—this is your throne. [*She seats her mother forcibly in the rocker and beamingly puts a new*

*twenty-dollar bill in her hand.*] With a great deal of love, mother. I haven't forgotten all you've done for me.

LINDA [*presenting five-dollar bill*]. Sorry mine isn't more, but, well—lots of love goes with it.

MRS. LARKIN. Why, you dear children—you *dear* things! But I couldn't think of accepting all this—I couldn't.

LINDA and CONNIE [*seeing her distress*]. Now, now, mother, it's all right. We love to do it for you.

GEORGE. With Connie's twenty and Linda's five, and—and your postal savings— [*He presents her with the postal savings envelope which she recognizes, but before she can take it, he withdraws it and puts it back in his pocket.*] I'll get the cash for you in the morning.

MRS. LARKIN [*searching for objections to raise*]. But, George—I don't want to go back to Maine. There's nothing back there, and I've got all my things about me here—why, I can't think—

DOT [*from the window*]. You don't have to—George has done all your thinking for you. The man will be here in the morning to crate all your furniture.

MRS. LARKIN [*showing the money*]. And it would take all this and a lot more—

DOT. Tell her how you've fixed it, George. [*She turns away, looking out of the window.*]

GEORGE [*to* MRS. LARKIN]. I was telling old Mr. Pringle, of the Express Company, how you'd miss your furniture. "Why, bless my soul," he said, with tears in his eyes, "your mother shall have her furniture if I have to carry it all the way to Maine on my back."

MRS. LARKIN. He'd have quite a load.

GEORGE. But it seems there's some old pioneer regulation about shipping the effects of destitute widows back east—

MRS. LARKIN [*covering her face*]. Oh, this is too much!

CONNIE. Poor dear, she can't take it in. Let's put these things away. It'll be less confusing. [GEORGE, LINDA *and* CONNIE *throw all the things, including the carpet rags, into*

*trunk indiscriminately and in a jiffy.* GEORGE *closes the lid as much as it will close. Meantime,* DOT *has come down to* MRS. LARKIN *and takes her hand.*]

MRS. LARKIN. Dot, I couldn't *stand* such a thing.

GEORGE [*having closed the trunk*]. There! That's done!

MRS. LARKIN. George—don't you understand? I can't go off and leave you children—

GEORGE } It's all right.
CONNIE } We won't need you.
LINDA } Not a bit!

MRS. LARKIN [*hurt*]. Oh!

GEORGE [*indulgently*]. We're big enough to look after ourselves now, mother.

MRS. LARKIN. But—but there's Julia— [DOT *goes back to the window.*]

LINDA. Julia isn't even here.

MRS. LARKIN [*simply*]. She comes when she needs me.

GEORGE. Or when Jim does.

MRS. LARKIN. Well, I want to be here—when I *am* needed.

GEORGE. That's all nonsense, mother, you're going to live your own life from now on.

LINDA. And rest your tired old eyes on the dear old rocky shores—

CONNIE. And watch the gray gulls spreading their wings—

GEORGE. And eat fresh fish—

LINDA. And play with sea-shells, like when you were a little girl—

DOT [*from the window*]. That lilac bush is lovelier than ever, this spring.

MRS. LARKIN. I brought that here with me—as a bride.

GEORGE. Bless her heart, she shall take the lilac bush back with her. [*Goes toward the hall, right.*] Where's the spade?

MRS. LARKIN [*rising in alarm*]. No, no! Please, George, no. It'd kill the bush, now—and there wouldn't be any

place to plant it. And I don't suppose the old cottage is still there, anyway.

GEORGE [*leading her to the table*]. Oh, yes, it is, yes, indeedy! I wrote east about it and here's the lease all ready for you to sign. [*He produces a paper and lays it on table; offers fountain pen.*] Sign your name right here —right on the dotted line.

MRS. LARKIN. But, George, I've got a lease on this house I'm living in now.

GEORGE [*producing another paper*]. Here's a release from your landlord—I managed that, too. You see, I thought of everything. [MRS. LARKIN *looks helplessly at her children, then at* DOT. DOT *moves away from the window, toward the hall, right. The doorbell rings violently.*]

DOT. I think it's Julia. [MRS. LARKIN *looks toward the hall.* DOT *runs out to open the door. The others also look expectantly toward door on right.*]

LINDA. Better put that money away, mother. [MRS. LARKIN *lays the twenty-five dollars on the table.* GEORGE *picks it up and puts it in his pocket.*]

DOT [*off*]. Hello, Julia.

JULIA [*breathlessly, as she comes in*]. Where's mother?

MRS. LARKIN [*going to meet her*]. Here I am, darling. Why, what's the matter with my little girl? You look all upside down.

JULIA. I am all upside down. Oh, mother, mother— [*She sinks into a chair.*] Jim—

CONNIE. What's your husband been up to *now?*

MRS. LARKIN. There, there, Julia, tell mother all about it. Come up to my room.

JULIA [*rising and crying*]. Oh, mother, I can't. After all you've done for me—I—I haven't the nerve. It—it's Jim's business. He's in a terrible hole. And unless he can raise a hu-hundred dollars— [*She sobs.*]

MRS. LARKIN. But, Julia—I'll let him have a hundred dollars—of course I will.

JULIA [*embracing her mother*]. Oh, mother, you're such an angel! How can I—how can I thank you? But I'll pay it back—this time—Jim will, you'll see.

CONNIE. It's outrageous of her!

LINDA. Sickening—that's what it is!

GEORGE. I won't have it—I won't permit it.

JULIA. It's just on account of the bank—to help make a payment. If he don't, the bank'll call his loan and he'll lose his business—and they'll take the house—and if Jim doesn't have the money by to-morrow noon— [*She weeps again.*]

MRS. LARKIN. There, dear, mother'll help you out.

CONNIE [*with a snort*]. Julia always was her pet.

MRS. LARKIN [*to* CONNIE]. No, dear, but Julia *needs* me. Don't you, Julia? Now, George, give me my postal savings.

GEORGE [*tapping his pocket*]. They're pretty safe where they are.

MRS. LARKIN. Give me the envelope, George.

DOT. Give it to her, George—it's hers.

GEORGE [*to* DOT]. Are you crazy?

DOT. She wants you to.

CONNIE. Don't do it! I won't have mother's plans upset.

DOT. *Mother's* plans?

MRS. LARKIN [*holding out her hand*]. I want it, George.

DOT. It's hers, George—you've no right to it. [GEORGE *hesitates.*]

LINDA. Oh, it's too cruel—

CONNIE [*grandiloquently*]. The pitiful savings of years—of heartbreaking disappointments—of sublime self-sacrifice—

GEORGE. What are you made of, Julia? Haven't you any *heart,* any *sentiment?*

CONNIE. Listen, Julia: for the first time we've got enough money together to send mother back to the home of her girlhood, for the first time it's possible for the dream of years to come true.

LINDA. But if you take that money—if you have the face to—

JULIA [*trying to control her emotions*]. No. I won't take the money. I couldn't take it, now.

MRS. LARKIN. But I want you to have it, Julia, I insist. Give me the book, George.

GEORGE [*obeying, sulkily*]. Well, I wash my hands of the whole matter. [*He produces the twenty-five dollars and slams it on the table.* DOT *goes back to her window.*]

MRS. LARKIN [*handing* JULIA *the postal-savings*]. Here, Julia, now run right along and tell Jim it's all right.

JULIA. I won't keep you from going to Maine, mother—I can't. That—that settles it. [*She puts the envelope on the table with emphasis and starts to go.*]

MRS. LARKIN. No, Julia, come back! [JULIA *stops and turns.* MRS. LARKIN *struggles with herself a moment.*] I—I don't *want* to go to Maine.

GEORGE, CONNIE, LINDA } What?!

[DOT, *seeing that she is not watched, waves her arm three times across the window, signal fashion.*]

MRS. LARKIN. I don't *wish* to go!

GEORGE, CONNIE, LINDA } Mother!

MRS. LARKIN. You've saved me from it, Julia. You've saved me from *having* to go.

CONNIE. She doesn't mean it—she doesn't realize what she's saying.

LINDA. She's saying it to get Julia to take the money.

DOT. She really *doesn't* want to go.

CONNIE. Dot! Don't be officious! [*The telephone rings, off left, and all turn toward it.*]

DOT [*going left*]. I'll answer it. I think I'd better. [*She goes out to the left.*]

CONNIE. Officious thing!

MRS. LARKIN. Now, Connie, Dot's all right.

DOT [*off, left, just beyond the dining-room door*]. Hello . . . yes . . . yes—just exactly! [*She giggles.*] Ye-es! Uh-huh! Fine! . . . I'll tell her. [*Returning.*] It was Jim.

JULIA [*as if she would go to telephone*]. Jim—!

DOT. He says to tell you it's all right, and he won't need the money.

JULIA. He won't? Oh, joy!

MRS. LARKIN. Well, now, Julia, he might—

DOT. He made some mistake about the date, or something—

GEORGE. Oh, he made a mistake, did he? Huh! A lot of good that does now!

DOT [*to* JULIA]. He says to come right on over home and he'll tell you all about it.

JULIA. Well, thank you just the same, mumsey. I'll be over again soon—honest I will. Good-by! [*She kisses her mother and goes.*]

MRS. LARKIN [*after* JULIA *has gone*]. Dot, was Jim really all right? Do you think it was true—what he told you to tell Julia?

DOT. Not exactly. You see, when I told Jim about the conspiracy to pack you off to Maine—

GEORGE<br>LINDA<br>CONNIE } Conspiracy!

DOT [*to* GEORGE]. Darling Blunderbuss, Jim and I were perfectly certain that Mother Larkin wouldn't want to break up her home here, so we sort of arranged things—

LINDA. Humph! I'd call *that* the *conspiracy!*

GEORGE [*to* MRS. LARKIN]. But if you didn't want to go—what in thunder were you saving up for?

MRS. LARKIN. Why I—why I—for years I've wanted to buy an overstuffed chair—

CONNIE. Overstuffed chair!

MRS. LARKIN. To take the place of that vicious old rocker. [CONNIE *and* LINDA *gasp.*]

GEORGE [*rubbing his shin*]. Well, by jimminy crickets.

CONNIE. I won't believe it.

LINDA. The excitement's gone to her head.

MRS. LARKIN. No, children, really I want to stay right here the rest of my days.

GEORGE. Well, why the deuce didn't you say so?

DOT. She did.

CONNIE [*beside herself*]. And all that romance about the rockbound coast—

LINDA. And lapping waves—

GEORGE. And fresh cod— [*He takes up his hat.*] Apple sauce! . . . Banana oil!

LINDA [*snatching up her bag*]. It's outrageous! Inexcusable!

CONNIE [*putting on her hat*]. Last time *I'll* try to do anything for her!

GEORGE. I'm through!

DOT. Husband—sisters—remember this is Mother's Day.

LINDA [*turning*]. A lot mother cares what day it is.

GEORGE [*coming back; to* DOT]. All very well for you and Jim—but *you* haven't been hoaxed all your life with a bally lot of fairy tales.

CONNIE [*picking up her hand-bag*]. And what will we say to our friends? I know what Phil is going to say when I tell him about that twenty—

LINDA. We'll say she couldn't go because Julia needs her.

GEORGE. Everybody I told thought it was such a beautiful idea—old Mr. Pringle and the ticket agent and—why, the whole town'll be laughing at us.

CONNIE. Mother's Day—huh!

MRS. LARKIN. Now, children, I don't want you to think I don't appreciate what you were trying to do for me, and I know this is all my fault. But, you see, after I'd

talked so much about Maine, I sort of went right on doing so.

CONNIE. And it was all a pretense—from the beginning!

MRS. LARKIN. No, no. For a time, after your father brought me here to live, I was terribly homesick. Everything was so different, and strangers all about me; I couldn't seem to get adjusted. But after a while the old days grew to be no more than a dream—although a shimmering dream—

GEORGE. And your trip that you used to plan—?

MRS. LARKIN. It's many years since I wanted to go back for good, but the trip for a visit—that was something to play with, to toss in my fancy. And I liked to talk about that long after I'd ceased really wanting to go.

GEORGE. Humph!

CONNIE. It would've been a good time to say so—when you did.

MRS. LARKIN [*getting the money from the table*]. I want you girls to take this back. I know you can't afford it—[*She offers* LINDA *the five.*]

LINDA [*taking the bill*]. Well, if you're not going—[MRS. LARKIN *holds out the twenty.*]

CONNIE [*taking it*]. Well, if all you want is an overstuffed chair—

GEORGE [*to* LINDA *and* CONNIE]. We'll say mother's getting too feeble to take the trip alone. [*He kisses* MRS. LARKIN'S *forehead perfunctorily.* LINDA *and* CONNIE *do likewise and with a good deal of stiffness. Then* GEORGE, LINDA *and* CONNIE *file out, right.*]

MRS. LARKIN [*seating herself wearily in her rocker*]. Dot, that lilac bush we transplanted—for a time it peaked and dwindled; then it got its roots in the new soil and thrived and blossomed. Why couldn't they understand that I, too, have taken root? [DOT *goes to her.* MRS. LARKIN *looks up at* DOT.] There's nothing back east any more. Every one's gone—father, mother—friends scattered. And the old house is probably neglected and overrun with rats—

[*She shudders.*] And no plumbing . . . kerosene lamps and blackened chimneys . . . and that great fish-cannery fouling the air—

DOT. I understand. I think I've always understood. You just wanted to keep the memory—as a dream. And now we've spoiled it.

MRS. LARKIN [*rocking*]. I suppose I've always had dreams—

DOT. Maybe we could coax that one back—if you tell me about it—just as you used to—

GEORGE [*appearing in doorway, right*]. Dot! Coming? [*He motions off, with his head.* DOT *shrugs, picks up her things, gives* MRS. LARKIN *a pecking kiss on her forehead and follows* GEORGE *out.* MRS. LARKIN *accepts the kiss as a spontaneous token of affection and smiles. She does not notice their departure and believes she is still talking to* DOT, *when she goes on.*]

MRS. LARKIN. I used to stand on the rocks by the sea and dream—dream of the time when I'd have a home of my own—and my children around me. [*She looks for* DOT, *sees that there is no one in the room, looks at the trunk, then closes her eyes and rocks.*]

[CURTAIN]

# THE MOTHERS THEY FORGOT *

By

MARGARET PARSONS

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## CHARACTERS

JANET, *president*
FRANCES
BARBARA
RUTH
OTHER GIRLS
} *Members of ..... club (troop, or class)*

THE SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD
MRS. MULVANEY AND BABY
BELGIAN WOMAN
ARMENIAN WOMAN, WITH CHILD
JAPANESE WOMAN
BELGIAN AND JAPANESE CHILDREN, *if desired*
JANET'S MOTHER
BARBARA'S MOTHER, *with baby*

# THE MOTHERS THEY FORGOT

This play may be presented for a Mother's Day program by any group of girls,—a Sunday School class, Girl Scout Troop, Camp Fire Group, church or school club. It is so written that it can be given with only four girls in the club meeting, besides those who play the parts of the mothers. It would be better to have more than four at the meeting, however, and some of the lines can be given to the additional ones if desired.

SCENE: *The scene is the room where the meeting is held. There is table and chair right front for president, other chairs for girls. At center back is a large frame, over which a curtain is hung. The frame should have mosquito netting tacked over it to give more the effect of a vision. Arrange lights so in back of screen can be lighted, with other lights turned off.*

TIME: *The present.*

COSTUMES: *Girls are dressed in school dresses.* SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD *wears a flowing robe and wears or carries white carnations.* MRS. MULVANEY *wears shabby clothes.* BELGIAN WOMAN *has plain waist, full skirt and shawl.* ARMENIAN WOMAN, *bright colored shawl and scarf tied over head.* JAPANESE WOMAN, *kimono.* OTHER MOTHERS *in modern dress.*

[*As curtain rises* RUTH *and* BARBARA *are hanging banner on wall. A special banner suitable for the group giving the play can be made by putting letters on back of any banner.* RUTH *is on chair with hammer and* BARBARA *is below with tacks.*]

BARBARA. Hurry up and get it hung before the other girls come.

RUTH. Well, how can I hurry when nobody hands me any tacks?

BARBARA. Oh, here they are. [RUTH *tacks it.*]

RUTH. There, I guess that will stay.

BARBARA. Until after the meeting maybe, but I doubt if it will hold much longer.

RUTH [*getting down from chair*]. You're a cheerful little helper, *you* are!

BARBARA [*looking at it*]. It looks pretty nice, doesn't it?

RUTH. Yes, it's rather fun to be a banner club. [*Here and elsewhere class, group or troop may be substituted for club according to what organization gives the play.*]

BARBARA. I expected we'd be awarded the banner this year, didn't you? We've really done a lot in the line of social service, with the box to Armenia and sending that family to the country last summer and all.

RUTH. Yes, I think we did do rather well, considering school and how busy we all are outside. [*Enter* JANET *and* FRANCES.]

JANET. Hello, everybody!

FRANCES. I thought we'd be the first.

RUTH and BARBARA. Hello, Janet! Hello, Frances! etc.

JANET [*seeing banner*]. Oh, look, they've got the banner hung!

FRANCES. Looks peachy, doesn't it?

JANET. It does to me all right. It represents a lot of work.

RUTH. The other clubs will have to work mighty hard to beat our record for social service next year. [*If there are to be more girls, they come in now and take places.*] Let's start! I have basket-ball practice later.

JANET [*sitting behind table*]. All right. I guess nobody else is coming. Will the meeting please come to order! [*All sit.*] As this is a special meeting, we will

leave the reading of the minutes until the next regular meeting, if no one objects.

BARBARA. What's this meeting for, any way?

JANET. If you will sit still and listen instead of talking all the time, I'll tell you.

RUTH. Wow! Take that!

JANET [*very business-like*]. This meeting was called at the suggestion of our adviser (councilor, etc.) who unfortunately could not be here to-day, for the purpose of considering whether our club should celebrate Mother's Day.

FRANCES. When is it, any way?

RUTH. A week from Sunday, but we might celebrate Saturday afternoon.

BARBARA. If we are going to do something about it, we'll have to hurry up and get started.

FRANCES. We have helped several mothers during the past year. Couldn't we do something special for one of them at this time?

JANET. That's a splendid idea, Frances. Don't you all think so? As long as we won the banner for doing the most social service of any club in the ——, we should live up to our reputation.

BARBARA. But what could we do? Which one would we help?

FRANCES. There is Mrs. Mulvaney whom we sent to the country, we might— [*Enter* SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD *and stands by door.*]

RUTH [*whispering*]. Look, who is that?

JANET. Have you come to our meeting?

SPIRIT. Yes, I have come, for I am the Spirit of Motherhood and I thought I might be welcome.

BARBARA. Indeed you are and you can surely help us plan our celebration for Mother's Day. We want you for our friend.

SPIRIT. I am already your friend, for you have helped some mothers during the past year, in your social service activities. I might summon them, and you could see which

one you wish to give further aid to in honor of Mother's Day. That was your plan, wasn't it?

JANET. Yes, to give some special aid to some mother who, we know, needs it.

SPIRIT. Then watch and we will pass back into the year that has gone! Behold! [*Raises arm as in a summons. Curtain has been drawn from frame. Lights on stage are put off, and light behind frame is turned on.* MRS. MULVANEY *stands there, with baby in her arms.*] You remember Mrs. Mulvaney, whom you sent to the country last summer with her sickly little baby, when both of them had been ill. The country air brought back her health and she feels that it saved the baby's life. Perhaps she is right; who knows? At any rate, she is very grateful to you. [MRS. MULVANEY *passes off.* BELGIAN WOMAN *comes on. She may have children clinging to her skirt.*] The Belgian woman remembers your club daily in her prayers, for your generous donations helped her to keep her fatherless children with her instead of sending them to a home. [*She passes.* ARMENIAN WOMAN *comes on. She has with her a child, dressed in American clothes.*] In far-off Armenia, this woman has a child who is warmly dressed in the clothes you collected and sent to her in the Christmas box. [*She passes.* JAPANESE WOMAN—*with child, if desired—appears.*] Oyota San is much pleased with the progress of her children, who go to the Missionary school and are being educated by the American teacher to whom you gave the special contributions when she lectured at this —— (church or school) last year. She smiles because she knows your class was a contributor. [*She passes. Pause.*]

JANET. Is that all? I think so. [SPIRIT *does not answer, but continues to look at frame.*]

BARBARA. Were you expecting others? I think we have seen all the mothers whom we have helped. [SPIRIT *still looks expectantly.*]

FRANCES. Are you waiting for some one else?

RUTH [*to* BARBARA]. Who can it be?

SPIRIT. I did expect some other mothers, but they have not been helped sufficiently to have strength to appear here.

FRANCES [*to* JANET]. Whom does she mean? I can't imagine.

SPIRIT. If you can't imagine, I feel sure the others will not come.

JANET. But who are they?

SPIRIT. Your own mothers.

FRANCES. But *they* are not refugees nor poor women; *they* don't need help.

SPIRIT. Really? Are you sure?

JANET. I don't understand.

SPIRIT. Yes, I think you do. Listen. Perhaps I can summon them to at least speak to you. [*All listen.*]

FRANCES' MOTHER'S VOICE. Frances, dear, I wish you would wash the dishes every night for a while. I don't feel so strong since I had the grippe, and I am so tired by the time night comes.

GIRL'S VOICE FROM SOME DISTANCE. Oh, all right. But I can't begin to-night. I'm going over to Barbara's to do my Latin and I don't want to keep her waiting. I'll begin to-morrow.

SPIRIT. Of course, you remembered the next night.

FRANCES. No, I'm afraid I never did.

BARBARA. And we didn't do much Latin either, as I remember. Wasn't that the night we decided to go to the movies and get up early the next morning to study? [JANET'S *mother appears behind frame.*]

RUTH. Look!

JANET. My mother! [*She keeps stooping and picking up things that have been left on floor or on chairs. These can have been arranged before or perhaps curtain has been drawn after* JAPANESE WOMAN, *giving time to put them there.*]

BARBARA. What's she doing?

SPIRIT. Ask Janet. She knows.

JANET. Yes, I know, all right. She's picking up my room.

SPIRIT. Didn't I hear you make a New Year's Resolution to keep your room cleared up, and not scatter your belongings all over the house?

JANET. That was a pretty good resolution, but it didn't stay kept, any more than my room stays cleared up. It is so easy to leave things lying around in the morning and when I come home at noon, they always seem to have found their proper places, somehow.

SPIRIT. Now you have seen how that happens. [BARBARA'S *mother wheels on baby carriage, with real baby in it, if possible.*]

RUTH. Look, who's coming now? [MOTHER *stops and speaks. Try to make voices sound as if they were in vision.*]

BARBARA'S MOTHER. Can't you take the baby out for a while this afternoon, Barbara? I'm so busy, it seems as though I couldn't ever get everything done.

BARBARA'S VOICE [*whining offstage*]. Oh, mother, have I got to to-day? Just because I didn't go to basket-ball practice I don't see why I have to take the baby out. I hate to have the girls all come home from practice and see me wheeling a baby around. Besides, *I'm* busy, too. I've got oodles of lessons to do. [MOTHER *goes off, looking distressed.*]

SPIRIT. I suppose the baby went without his airing.

BARBARA. Oh, no, mother always takes him if I don't. She seems to find time somehow, and *she* doesn't mind being seen with a baby carriage.

VOICE OF RUTH'S MOTHER. Ruth!

JANET. Who's that calling?

MOTHER. Ruth! Are you going to the club meeting this afternoon?

RUTH'S VOICE [*offstage*]. Yes, right away.

MOTHER'S VOICE. Are you planning to sew?

RUTH'S VOICE. Yes, I guess so.

MOTHER'S VOICE. Well, couldn't you take along some

stockings to darn? I'm all behind in my mending this week, and there will be another lot before I get those done. Your embroidery can wait.

RUTH. Oh, I'll do the stockings when I get home to-night. Honest, I'd be ashamed to take that great bulky bag of stockings to the club. And Tommy does wear such terrible holes. I think they ought to be thrown away before they get so bad. Any way, I'm not going to exhibit them at any club meeting. But I'll do some to-night or Saturday morning.

FRANCES. I bet you never did.

RUTH. You're right there. I never even thought of them again.

[*If there are more than four girls in the cast,* SPIRIT *says: "There are other mothers of girls here who might speak to you, but I think you have seen enough to realize that there are many mothers whom this club has had the opportunity to help.*]

SPIRIT. There seem to be many mothers whom this class has had the opportunity to help. But which ones are you going to honor on Mother's Day? The Belgian or the Armenian or the Japanese? Or some nearer home?

JANET. While we've been working for the mothers across the seas, it does seem as though we had been neglecting our own.

BARBARA. We were going to have our Mother's Day program Saturday afternoon, weren't we?

JANET. Yes.

BARBARA. Well, then, I say let's not have any meeting. Let's all stay home and see how much each one of us can help our mothers on that day. I'll start it by washing the lunch dishes and then taking the baby for a walk.

RUTH. And I'll tell mother to save next week's darning for me. Oh, we'll all find plenty to do.

JANET. But we mustn't make it just a one-day affair.

FRANCES. It would be a step in the right direction, any way. We'd at least make our mothers feel we wanted to

help, and then we'd try to keep it up throughout the year, and make home service as much part of our club program as social service.

JANET. Oh, the Spirit of Motherhood knows how much we love our mothers, only helping them seems so much more commonplace than sending aid to the mothers of some far-away and picturesque country or even to the poor people of this city (town).

SPIRIT. How often do we fail to see the beauty in what is close at hand! Is not the color of a dandelion as rich as that of a chrysanthemum? Are not the wood violets and columbine as exquisite in their formation as the orchid? Is ever a stained glass window more dazzlingly brilliant than a sunset which all the world can look upon? And so, the most beautiful thing in all creation, the love of a mother for her baby, is common not only in human life, among all nations and tribes, but also among many of the animals. Perhaps, after all, the most lowly is the best way in which you can honor mother love on Mother's Day.

[CURTAIN]

[*For curtain call, have group of all mothers and girls.*]

# MOTHERS OF MEN *

By

PERCIVAL WILDE

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## CHARACTERS

Mrs. Chepstowe
The Caller

# MOTHERS OF MEN

*"A sumptuously furnished drawing-room; magnificent furniture, priceless paintings, rugs more yielding than moss. And everything beautiful, costly, and in the best of good taste."*

*Let the reader, if he will, imagine the precise opposite. Not that anything that strikes his eye is distinctly shabby, or that any particle of dust mars the neatness of the room; for* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *prides herself on her housekeeping, and would feel justly slighted at any animadversions upon it. But the furniture presents that curious conglomerate effect which indicates a compromise between comfort and fashion. The late* MR. CHEPSTOWE *cared entirely for the former; his widow struggled as best she could for the latter. The result is distressing: could not have been more distressing even if the family purse had been deeper. For the room is crammed with an abundance of poorly designed and cheaply made movables. In the care of a less conscientious owner they would have fallen to pieces long ago. But by dint of plenty of elbow grease they retain something of their pristine condition, something of the congenital senility, of the old-maidish stiffness and primness of the Victorian period.*

*"There is no place like home," sang the poet. He never knew how literally truthful his asseveration might become. For each of the thousand two-room apartments which Maida Vale boasts rejoices in monstrosities peculiar to itself, sufficient to differentiate it immediately from all the others.*

*In the center of her beloved horrors sits* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *herself, a well-preserved widow of some fifty odd years,*

*with "middle-class" almost visibly written over her features.* MR. CHEPSTOWE *had considered himself part of the backbone of the British nation, and had announced himself as such times without number over the counter of his ironmonger's shop on Ludgate Hill. His widow continues to live up to his reputation, and as she sits knitting in her easy-chair this crisp October afternoon, her thoughts wander with a certain pride to the past, which was a tedious but emphatic uphill climb, and with a sudden pang to the present, for, like a million other British women, she has a son "somewhere in France," and would give much to see him face to face.*

[*The doorbell rings.* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *folds her knitting carefully, rises, and leaves the room. She is heard to open the door to the hall. There is a sound of voices. Presently words become distinguishable.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*outside*]. If you will step in here . . . [*She opens the door to the living room. A woman of the same age, but far better dressed,—presumably a member of fashionable society, precedes her into the room.*] Yes? What can I do for you? [*But the caller is in a fearful state of excitement, trembling, flustered, unable to speak coherently, and* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *recognizes it.*] Won't you sit down? [*She offers a chair.*]

THE CALLER [*sitting, with a gasp of relief*]. Thank you.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. And a cup of tea?

THE CALLER. No, no.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*proceeding towards the tea-table*]. It will take only a minute.

THE CALLER. No, no. I couldn't drink anything. [*There is a pause. Then* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *makes an effort to relieve the situation.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Lovely weather we've been having, isn't it? And so unusual at this time of year. I went for a walk yesterday, and I don't know when I enjoyed anything so much.

THE CALLER. Yes, yes.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. I started bright and early in the morning. [*She checks off on her fingers.*] Abercorn Place, Abbey Road, Marlborough Road, Queen's Road, all the way to Primrose Park. Then I came back by way of Park Road and St. John's Wood. I felt quite refreshed. [*She pauses.*]

THE CALLER [*taking up her subject suddenly*]. You are Mrs. Albert Chepstowe?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Yes.

THE CALLER. I am Mrs. Howard Chepstowe.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*interested*]. Oh, we have the same name, haven't we? And it's such an unusual name. Do your husband's people come from Lancashire, by any chance?

THE CALLER [*with a visible effort*]. No: Devon.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*disappointed*]. Oh. I didn't know there were any Chepstowes living there. [*Confidentially.*] There was an aunt of my husband's who was so much interested in genealogy, and who traced the Chepstowe family all the way back to the Conquest. She'd have been so glad to know you.

THE CALLER [*interrupting abruptly*]. Mrs. Chepstowe, this came for me yesterday. [*She fumbles in her chatelaine, and pulls out an envelope with the royal crest and the H. M. S. frank on it.* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *takes it, but recognizes its import even before she has opened the flap.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. You poor thing!

THE CALLER [*breaking into tears*]. You know what it is?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Every woman in the Kingdom knows. Every woman in the Kingdom is afraid of getting such a letter any day. [*She shakes her head in sympathy.*] Who was it? Your husband?

THE CALLER [*between her sobs*]. No—he's been dead many years.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Then your son?

THE CALLER. My son. My only son.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. I don't know what to say to you. I really don't. [*There is a pause.*]

THE CALLER. For a week, no letter from him. Then this: killed at La Bassée, the twenty-ninth.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. The twenty-ninth? That was Michaelmas.

THE CALLER. As if it made any difference what day it was! All that I know is that from now on it will be the most terrible day in the year to me. The twenty-ninth; I went to theater that evening. Perhaps the letter was even then on its way to me . . . Yesterday it came, with the first mail. What I have gone through since—you can't imagine!

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*gently*]. I don't have to imagine. I have a son at the front myself. [*She pauses; smiles sadly. The caller makes no remark.*] He didn't enlist in the early days of the war. An only child, you see, and I wasn't anxious to have him go. Just the two of us there were, and I thought the mothers who had more than one son might give up some of theirs. I had no one but Tom. So we talked it over. He was eager; said that England needed every man who was strong enough to shoulder a gun, but he looked at me, and around our cozy little home, and he must have seen the expression in my eyes, because he said he'd wait awhile. And I said, "Yes, Tom." And then he'd come home evenings, and tell me how his friends had gone off, and how Dickie Fitzgerald was a corporal now, and how Will Tupper, that great, big, hulking fellow, who they thought would never amount to anything, had gotten the V. C. Will Tupper, whom Tom had given a beating in his school days! Then he'd pick up the paper, and he'd say, "Mother, Kitchener needs more men." I knew what was coming, but I acted as if it was nothing. I said, "Yes, Tom." We come of an old fighting stock, you know. His great-grandfather fought through the Peninsular War. It was his blood in Tom's veins, and it needed more than I

could add to cool it down. So I said nothing, but I went over Tom's clothes—saw that he had warm underwear, and heavy socks. And then, then, I had always thought it would be of an evening, but it wasn't—it was after breakfast one Sunday, Tom pushed his plate away, and looked at me—just looked at me. I knew what it meant. Without his saying a word, I knew what it meant. I had seen that look so often in my dreams and I had awakened so often trembling, hoping it was only a nightmare. But I said, "Yes, Tom." [*She bows her head and is silent an instant.*] He took me in his arms, and I put my lips up to his—he's much taller than me—and he said, "Little mother, I'm going to leave you to-morrow," and I said, "Yes, Tom." He squared his shoulders, did my boy, and he said, "There's a man's work to be done," and—and the next night I ate my supper alone.

THE CALLER [*after a pause, gently*]. I know how you felt.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*nodding, and wiping away a tear*]. I used to say that to myself: that there were so many other mothers whose sons meant just as much to them as mine meant to me. But I can't believe it. I don't suppose any of them believe it. That's what it is to be a mother.

THE CALLER [*half to herself*]. They're all alike, aren't they?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*without answering*]. I know how I used to worry about his scrapes when he was at school. He wasn't a *bad* boy, but he was a mischievous boy: he was always up to something. [*She smiles.*] One day he came home full of splinters: more splinters than boy, I think. He had climbed the flag-pole, and slid down too fast. Anybody else would have broken a leg, at least. Tom wasn't a bit upset; would have done it again, except that the splinters hurt. Another day he fell out of the window, trying to see who could lean out furthest. He won. [*She pauses.*] Well, after a few of those things had happened it wasn't so bad. I made up my mind he wasn't

born to be killed—or he'd have been killed long ago. That's the one thought that comforts me to-day. [*With sudden recollection.*] Oh, I beg your pardon. I was thoughtless.

THE CALLER. You needn't apologize. I used to think the same thing about *my* son. The scrapes that he got into at Eton! Why, it makes my hair stand on end even to think of them. And Cambridge was no better; it wasn't six months before he was hit over the head playing polo.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Oh, your son played polo? [*Naïvely.*] You must be rich.

THE CALLER [*embarrassed*]. Mr. Chepstowe was well-to-do.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*eagerly*]. What was his business? My Mr. Chepstowe was an ironmonger.

THE CALLER. He had no business.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*surprised*]. What?

THE CALLER. He was a gentleman.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*vastly impressed*]. A gentleman! Now what do you think of that? [*She shakes her head.*] *I* always wanted to be rich, if only for what I could have done for my boy. Eton—and Cambridge—and polo—I always wanted him to have such things, but I could never afford them. [*Looking at the caller with added respect.*] Your son must have been an officer?

THE CALLER. No.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. *Not* an officer?

THE CALLER. He enlisted the day war was declared. He had had no experience. I could have gotten him a commission, but he wouldn't take it: said he wasn't fit to command men who knew more than he did.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*appreciatively*]. That was fine, wasn't it? I suppose they sent him off to one of the training camps?

THE CALLER. Yes.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. That's what they did with my boy. Just to think of it! In a training camp, along with gentlemen! And then—

THE CALLER. Off to France.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*with a sudden change of tone*]. Yes; off to France. [*There is a pause. The caller is evidently ill at ease. Then she continues, rather abruptly.*]

THE CALLER. Mrs. Chepstowe, I don't know what you'll think of me, but—

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Yes?

THE CALLER. You're so wonderful about it that I don't know what to say. And it was the only reason I came here. [*She stops uncertainly.* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *is silent. The caller takes the plunge.*] Do you know a man named Safford?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Safford?

THE CALLER. Lieutenant the Honourable Cecil Safford?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. The Honourable? How should I know an Honourable?

THE CALLER [*avoiding* MRS. CHEPSTOWE'S *eyes*]. He was badly wounded some time ago: so badly they didn't dare move him. He was invalided home this week . . . He was in the same regiment as my son. When—when the letter came, I stopped in to see him.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*anticipating*]. And he told you that your son died fighting bravely—

THE CALLER [*interrupting with ill-concealed excitement*]. He hadn't heard. He didn't know until I told him. He wasn't with the regiment then. He had been wounded before that. I told you.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. I'm sorry; I forgot.

THE CALLER. He was shocked to hear about my son. They had been close friends; were in Cambridge together. But it suddenly occurred to him— [*She breaks off.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*encouragingly*]. Yes?

THE CALLER [*with averted face*]. I don't know what you'll think of me for saying this—it's too terrible. [*In desperation.*] But I'm a mother, you know, and he's my only son. Lieutenant Safford suddenly recalled that there

was another man in the regiment with the same name as my son.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*rising terror-stricken*]. The same name as your son? What do you mean?

THE CALLER [*also rising*]. Your son's name is Tom Chepstowe?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Well?

THE CALLER [*facing her with compressed lips*]. *That* was the name!

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*with a wail*]. Oh, how *could* you!

THE CALLER [*with a fierce resolution*]. To a mother anything is permitted. The same name, the same regiment; they might have made a mistake.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. How dare you!

THE CALLER. It's my son or your son!

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. My son wasn't born to be killed!

THE CALLER. *I* thought the same thing.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. But I *know!*

THE CALLER. I went to the War Office, and they told me—

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*interrupting*]. That there was no mistake.

THE CALLER [*with emphasis*]. That they would try and make sure. [*Breaking down suddenly.*] Mrs. Chepstowe, for twenty-four hours they've been trying to make sure! I thought I'd go mad! For twenty-four hours I've been *living* there, going from one clerk to another, directed, misdirected, and they're all so kind, and they don't know [*with pathetic sarcasm*], and they're trying to make sure. And in the meantime—! [*She breaks off in agony.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*regaining something of her equanimity after a pause*]. It isn't my son. I had a letter from him yesterday.

THE CALLER. I had a letter from *my* son *to-day!*

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*horrified*]. No!

THE CALLER. Dated the twenty-eighth. [*As the other looks her incredulity, she fumbles in her bag and pulls out*

*a crumpled note.*] Don't you believe me? Listen to this: "Dear Mater—" [*She chokes; reaches the note to* MRS. CHEPSTOWE.] Read it yourself if you like.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*recoiling in horror*]. No! No!

THE CALLER. I couldn't stand it alone! It was more than I could bear! I came to you because you *must* listen! Because you are the one woman in the world who must share my agony with me!

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*with unutterable loathing*]. You beast!

THE CALLER. That's right! Call me names! Call me all the names you like! I know how you feel. And I would feel the same in your place. But I *had* to do it! At the War Office, a thousand other women, trying to find out, running from clerk to clerk, running from door to door, trying to make sure. *They* didn't have time to listen to me. They were too busy telling their own stories. But you—you *must* listen! You must hear me! [*There is a pause.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*with a quivering gesture of the thumb*]. Mrs. Chepstowe, the door—the door!

THE CALLER. What?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*trying to control herself*]. Will you go?—or shall I *throw* you out? [*The door-bell rings. The women face each other, motionless, panting. Then* MRS. CHEPSTOWE *collects herself, and leaves the room quietly. A pause. Then, from outside, comes a pitiable gasp. The caller raises her head in instant comprehension; rushes to the door; flings it open. Outside stands* MRS. CHEPSTOWE, *tottering, barely keeping herself erect—and there is an envelope in her hand.*]

THE CALLER [*in an hysterical outburst*]. I was right! I knew it! Thank God! I was right! I was right! [MRS. CHEPSTOWE *advances slowly into the room: advances with the unsure step of a sick woman. The caller suddenly regains control of herself; is motionless, save for the nervous twitching of her lips, and her rapid breathing.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*in an absolutely colorless voice*]. Let me see your letter.

THE CALLER. Yes; yes. Of course. [*She hands it over.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. La Bassée—September twenty-ninth —*your* son.

THE CALLER [*gently*]. No: yours.

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*in the same dispassionate tones*]. Mine—at Loos—October second.

THE CALLER [*in a ghastly whisper*]. What?

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. Loos—October second.

THE CALLER [*terror-stricken*]. Give me the letters. [*She snatches them from* MRS. CHEPSTOWE'S *icy hand; compares them. Then, with a heart-rending cry.*] Both!

MRS. CHEPSTOWE [*with quiet assent*]. Both.

THE CALLER [*dropping the letters to the floor*]. Oh, my God! [*A pause. Quivering, the women face each other. Their hands clench nervously; their mouths are half open, as if they were beasts about to spring at each other's throats. And in the half second that has passed, both of them look older—so much older! And* MRS. CHEPSTOWE'S *breath comes more quickly—and still more quickly, and the other woman faces her gaspingly, as a rabbit faces a snake. An instant's pause; then both collapse, fall into each other's arms, weeping.*]

MRS. CHEPSTOWE. You poor woman! You poor woman!

[THE CURTAIN FALLS]

# AT THE MULE: A FRAGMENT *

By

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

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## CHARACTERS

Three Sergeants
Francois Villon
Colin Des Cayeulx
Old Woman
Marthe
Rene de Montigny
Casin Cholet

# AT THE MULE: A FRAGMENT *

*Paris, Christmas Eve,* 1456. *At the tavern called the Mule, opposite St. Bennet's Cloister, near Sorbonne.*

*The night is bitterly cold, and through the window at the back snow is seen falling. Three tallow torches gutter in their holders in the draught from the open door at the back leading to the street, and the ragged tapestry on one of the walls flutters and flaps. In the wide open fireplace a fire is dying. The floor is sparsely strewn with dirty rushes, mixed with mud and snow.*

*At this precise moment all the nightly clients of the Mule have just made a scrambling exit through a smaller door on the right, leading to a passage contrived to facilitate urgent departures. All, that is, save two, who are standing in the middle of the room, facing* THREE SERGEANTS *of the Châtelet, who, judging by the overturned stools and flagons on the floor, have just entered on business. There is one other person in the room—a small bent old woman muffled in a cloak and hood, who is sitting on a stool near the fireplace rocking feebly to and fro.*

*The two men facing the* SERGEANTS *wear shabby academic gowns and an air of bravado. Both are sharp-featured and furtive. Their names are* FRANCOIS VILLON *and* COLIN DES CAYEULX, *members of the University of Paris. As the* SERGEANTS *burst into the Mule the two have just completed their arrangements over supper, with three others, now well round the corner, for breaking this same night into the College of Na-*

* This play does not pretend to correspond accurately to historical fact.

*varre,—where the Faculty of Theology has a chest containing some five hundred gold pieces,—and have not had time to get away. The* SERGEANT *in command, a robust and at heart kindly officer, contemplates them with satisfaction.*

SERGEANT. Take your time, Ma. Get your breath. [*To* VILLON *and* CAYEULX.] Now, my lads. Fancy I know you, don't I?

CAYEULX [*politely*]. A poor scholar, sir. At your service.

SERGEANT. Yes; yes; yes. A fine bird you are. I've seen you before. [*Peers at* VILLON.] And your ugly pal too. No, don't move. Corbeau! Pontet! If either of these tries to hop off, you give 'im the steel. Understand?

2ND and 3RD SERGEANTS. Aye, aye. [*The* SERGEANTS *cast a glance round the tavern.*]

SERGEANT. Always sure of getting something here, I must say. Nice little pub this is! Charming company! Ho, yes. [*Laughs ironically and stirs the fire with a boot. To the* OLD WOMAN.] Now then, Ma. Feeling better?

OLD WOMAN [*feebly*]. Yes, sir, a little, thank you, sir.

SERGEANT [*briskly*]. Well, then. To business. Stand steady, you two.

CAYEULX [*politely*]. Might I make bold to inquire, sir, what charge, if any, you have to bring against us, or under what suspicion we appear to lie?

SERGEANT. The charge against you I'm coming to directly. The charge against your pretty friend fust. [*Coughs and spits into the fire.*] Now, then, you. Where was you half an hour after sundown on the night of Thursday, the twenty-third? Wait! [*Puts up his hand.*] I'll tell you. It'll save time. You was 'anging round a certain church. That church was Saint-Sévérin. One of the watch seen you 'anging round the porch, waiting for the people coming out. You were there prowlin' about watching your chance of nipping orf with somebody's purse. I

know your 'abits, my friend. We 'ad you in the Châtelet one day for stabbin' a bloke in the Wooden Sword by St. Merri. Little drops of water forced down your gullet don't seem to do you no good. It'll be something 'arder to swallow this time, let me tell you. Well, you 'ung round, and when they come out you followed a old woman down the dark side of the 'ill toward the river. You then suddenly 'it the old woman over the 'ead, grabbed 'er satchel, and run like 'ell toward the direction of the Petit Pont. You were recognized by 'er on account of your striped 'ose, and also by your— [*To* CAYEULX.] What are you doing? [CAYEULX *has been edging gently toward one of the torches—the one of two still remaining.*]

CAYEULX. Nothing, Sergeant, I am listening to your discourse with keen interest.

SERGEANT. None o' your lip, my lad. Your turn's coming.

CAYEULX [*politely*]. If you say so, Sergeant. Certainly. [*The* 1ST SERGEANT *turns to the* OLD WOMAN. *As he does so* CAYEULX *with lightning speed kicks a stool behind the knees of the* 2ND SERGEANT *on the right, who falls to the ground; and giving his brother* SERGEANT *a violent shove, brings him down also.* CAYEULX *leaps between them, vaults a table, and is out of the door almost before the* 1ST SERGEANT *can turn.*]

SERGEANT [*spluttering*]. Mordieu! After him! Fools! Imbeciles! Catch him! Never mind this bloke. Run! He's gone up the alley. Run! [*The* 2ND *and* 3RD SERGEANTS *rise clumsily and run out.*]

SERGEANT [*raging*]. Gord 'elp 'im, I say. 'E'll know all about it when we get 'im. I wouldn't be in 'is skin for a few crowns when Messire Henry gets 'is 'ands on 'im in the lower chamber. 'E'll sing a loud song, I tell you. [*He puffs and fumes, and calms down with an effort.*] Now then, you. Let's get you settled, any'ow. Get up, Ma. [*The* OLD WOMAN *rises with difficulty.*] Go over and 'ave a good look at the pretty gentleman over there, and

tell me if 'e isn't the one what nipped your bag. Blimey! A sport, 'e is! Pinching five brass 'uns and a 'oly medal from a poor old woman old enough to be 'is mother! Now, Ma. Quick as you like. [*The* OLD WOMAN *approaches* VILLON *slowly. He shrinks back into the shadow. She peers at him. He shrinks farther. Suddenly with a little whimpering cry she draws his head down and puts her arms round his neck.*]

OLD WOMAN. Oh, my dearie! Is it you? My dearie! [VILLON *looks at her with a queer expression.*]

VILLON. Yes, mother. [*She strokes his head with trembling hands.*]

SERGEANT [*staring*]. Ho! And very pretty, too. Can't rob enough old women, but must rob 'is aged mother! A very nice boy, Ma. [VILLON *has sat down. His mother is stroking his head.*] Well? 'E is the one, isn't 'e?

OLD WOMAN [*trembling*]. No, sir.

SERGEANT. Come, come, Ma. You know. Why, you gave 'is true description.

OLD WOMAN. No, sir. This isn't the one.

SERGEANT [*impatiently*]. You won't save 'im from what's coming to 'im, you know, by saying that. We've 'ad our eye on 'im. The Provost knows 'im. Leader of a gang, 'e is. They'll pinch anything. They'd pinch the Bishop's ring while 'e was confirming 'em. Thorough bad 'ats, the 'ole lot. I know 'im. An' 'e's a blooming poet too, Gord 'elp us! Makes up rimes instead of doing a honest day's work. [*Spits in disgust.*] That's a pretty thing to be. Sneak thieves is 'uman, but to make up blooming rimes all day—blimey, Ma, it's agin nature. 'E'll 'ang, all right. It's coming to 'im. Stand up, you. What's your name, now?

VILLON. Montcorbier, François. Called Villon.

SERGEANT. Age?

VILLON. Twenty-five.

SERGEANT. Birthplace?

VILLON. Paris.

SERGEANT. Civil status, if any?

VILLON. Master of Arts.

OLD WOMAN [*trembling*]. A very good boy, sir, and clever. A bit headstrong, but a good boy. He was at the University, sir. He is very good to me. He— [*The* SERGEANT *lifts a magisterial finger.*]

SERGEANT. Lots o' things 'e's qualified in, Ma, besides recitin' 'Omer and that Latin lot, believe me. [*The* OLD WOMAN *utters a cry.*]

VILLON. All right, mother. Don't take on.

OLD WOMAN. My dearie! [*She puts her arms round him.*]

SERGEANT. Don't take on, Ma. I'm a family man myself. Gord bless you, 'e'll only give you a peck of trouble. 'E's better 'ung. I've got one o' my own 'oo'l go through it one day. Just a bit o' bad luck on the likes o' you and me, that's all.

OLD WOMAN [*with a cry*]. They won't 'ang 'im, sir?

SERGEANT [*scratching his chin*]. Well, Ma, it's all according. Some cases they just 'ands over to Messire Henry, and 'e and 'is men deals with 'em. [VILLON *shivers.*] Some they brands, and some they shoves in prison, and some they just takes and 'angs, to save everybody trouble, like. [*Judicially.*] 'E's about due for the 'igh jump, I think.

VILLON. Sergeant! Can't I speak to my mother?

SERGEANT. Certainly, my lad. [*A chime of bells outside.*] Don't make 'er late for church. [*He sits on a stool, with his halberd across his knees, watching them.*]

VILLON. Mother, you must go.

OLD WOMAN. Hush, dearie.

VILLON. They will take me away directly.

OLD WOMAN. I will come with you, my dearie.

VILLON. Where I am going, mother, you can't. [*Pause.*] This isn't the only thing they've got me for. They only wanted this.

OLD WOMAN. This what, dearie?

VILLON. This—this stealing your bag.

OLD WOMAN. But you didn't, my dearie. It was a tall gentleman, with a shade over his eye.

SERGEANT. Come, come, Ma.

OLD WOMAN. Yes, indeed it was, sir.

VILLON. Mother!

OLD WOMAN. I surely know my own son, sir.

SERGEANT. You say it wasn't 'im now?

OLD WOMAN. No, sir. It wasn't.

SERGEANT. You'll 'ave to take your oath, Ma. Do you still say that? [*The* OLD WOMAN *stiffens.*]

OLD WOMAN [*feebly*]. It was a tall man, sir, with a shade over his eye.

SERGEANT. You are prepared to swear that? [*The* OLD WOMAN *nods.*]

SERGEANT. On the Gospels? [*The* OLD WOMAN *nods.*]

SERGEANT. You know what 'appens to them that willfully swears false oaths on the 'Oly Gospels?

OLD WOMAN [*almost inaudibly*]. Yes.

SERGEANT. They goes to 'Ell. [*He twirls his mustache.*] Not only that. They sometimes get a 'ell of a time before they goes, too.

OLD WOMAN. They couldn't do much hurt to an old woman, sir.

SERGEANT [*judicially*]. Perhaps not. But after they've finished—!— [*The* OLD WOMAN *bows her head.*]

VILLON. Mother, you are not to do this. [*The inner door opens and a young woman painted and bedizened, comes in, defiantly. Her name is* MARTHE.]

SERGEANT. What do you want, young woman? [VILLON *looks up.*]

MARTHE. Good evening, Sergeant. I've just come in. Make a note of that.

SERGEANT. Very well.

MARTHE. I wasn't 'ere earlier on, and I wasn't 'ere last Tuesday when Fat Clotilde got done in. Make a note of that too.

SERGEANT. Very well. [*Pause.*] 'Ere. Do you know anything of the movements of the prisoner 'ere on the night of the twenty-third? Take your time.

VILLON. Marthe! [*She looks at him scornfully.*]

MARTHE. Yes. He was with me. [VILLON *sighs with relief.*] And went out to get wine. He never came back. I missed two silver spoons at the same time.

VILLON. Marthe!

SERGEANT. That doesn't 'elp 'im much.

MARTHE. Help 'im? *'Im?* [*She surveys* VILLON *a moment, arms akimbo, bursts out laughing, waves her hand to the* SERGEANT *and flaunts out, still laughing, to the door. She pauses there and comes back slowly.* VILLON'S *head is in his hands. The* OLD WOMAN *rises and faces* MARTHE.]

OLD WOMAN. God and our Blessed Lady forgive you, young woman, for hurting my lad the way you have.

MARTHE. Hurt him? [*She laughs.*] I never asked him to come 'anging round me like a sick dog, did I?

VILLON. You weren't always like this, Marthe.

SERGEANT. You should 'a' 'andled 'er better, my lad.

MARTHE [*to* VILLON]. When you're drunk you're a blasted nuisance. When you're not drunk you're writin' po'try. I don't say you're not a gamy lad when you're roused, but I can't stand a man that mopes round all day lookin' like one of the bloody death's-'eads off the cemetery wall. If you want to know why I 'ad you shoved in the street the other night, that's straight. Besides, a girl's got to eat.

OLD WOMAN [*to* VILLON]. My dearie! [*Strokes his hair.*]

VILLON. I've given you something, Marthe, that's better than money.

MARTHE [*with scorn*]. Don't mention it.

VILLON [*with shining eyes*]. I've given you Immortality. Your name will be in men's mouths for ever. There is a ballade I've written in my heart's blood. If you weren't a common, dirty little drab you'd kneel and kiss

my hand and thank God your name's in it. [*She laughs discordantly.*]

SERGEANT [*judicially*]. That's all very well, my lad, but it don't fill a girl's stomach. You should ha' given her a cold pig's-foot.

VILLON [*rising*]. By God! It's I should be thanking you, too, for treating me like the dirt you have. I thank you for myself, because you wrung that ballade out of my pain; and I thank you for all the millions in the years to come who will read my verse and say, "This is a poet!" [*Pause.*]

MARTHE. And what about my two silver spoons, Mister Immortality?

SERGEANT. You better get along, my girl. We'll come to that all in good time. [MARTHE *gives* VILLON *a vicious glance, shrugs, and goes out humming a tune. A distant clash of bells, answered by a nearer chime.*]

SERGEANT. Well, now, Ma. There's the bells. You'll be late for Mass if we don't 'urry up. What about it?

OLD WOMAN [*trembling*]. I'll swear, sir, on the Holy Gospels, this is not the gentleman that robbed me.

VILLON. Mother, you shan't do it. You can't swear that!

SERGEANT. You got a soul, you know, Ma. It's terrible to go to 'ell. [*Pause.*]

OLD WOMAN. I gave my body pain for 'im. My soul's my own.

VILLON [*resolutely*]. I will not let you. I will swear you are lying.

SERGEANT. It'll be the question for *you* this time, sonny. It 'urts. [VILLON *shudders.*]

OLD WOMAN. Our Blessed Lady will not let me go into the fire for the sake of love, dearie.

VILLON. Mother, go to church now and pray for me.

OLD WOMAN [*calmly*]. No. I will not let them have you, dearie.

SERGEANT [*resigned*]. Very well. Time's up. If you

won't press this 'ere charge you'll 'ave to swear. One thing or the other. [*He lugs from his doublet a small book of the Gospels.*] Take this book in your right 'and. Say: "I swear—" [*He suddenly staggers back with a gag in his mouth as two men leap on him from behind and bear him back, swiftly binding him. He struggles, but is helpless. They knock his head on the ground, and he falls senseless.*]

RENE DE MONTIGNY. Quick! Get out!

VILLON [*irresolutely*]. I—

CASIN CHOLET. Get out of it, you blasted fool.

VILLON. When he wakes up—

CASIN CHOLET [*hissing*]. He won't. Get out quickly. We'll shove it on Gilles. He and Marthe brought the cops here to-night. Get out!

OLD WOMAN [*shivering*]. Dearie, they are not going to hurt the gentleman?

VILLON [*soothing her*]. No, mother.

MONTIGNY [*to* CHOLET]. The well? [CHOLET *nods. They carry the* SERGEANT *out. The bells begin clashing continuously.*]

OLD WOMAN. My dearie, I am going to Saint-Sévérin. Will you come with me? Our Lady would like you to. She is so very good to me. I am only a poor old woman, and no scholar, but she hears me. My dearie, do you remember, when you were a little thing, I took you every Christmas to church at midnight? And the supper after? The lovely candles on the table, and the Christmas log a-burning, and the sugar plums and the goose? You were very little then. It was so long ago. I hardly see you now, my dearie. Of course you are a scholar and you have to study in great books. [*Pleadingly.*] Won't you, just this once? [VILLON *coughs and passes his hand before his eyes.*]

VILLON. There, there, mother. I can't to-night. I have —I have a lot of work to do.

OLD WOMAN [*eagerly*]. Good books, dearie? The ones

in black letters with the pictures in gold and red? The sort the holy doctors read, and the bishops?

VILLON. Yes, mother. Good books. [*Patting her gently.*] Now go. It is nearly midnight. You will miss the Gospel. Pray for me. [*The* OLD WOMAN *embraces him with trembling hands, and draws her cloak round her.*]

OLD WOMAN. Yes, dearie, will you give your old mother, who has only a year or two to live, a little gift this Christmas night? [*She scans his face eagerly.*]

VILLON [*with a shrug*]. Mother, I haven't a brass piece in the world. What can I give you?

OLD WOMAN [*with shining eyes*]. You once promised me, my very dearie, years ago, when you went to the University and began to make fine poetry, that some day you would make a poem to our Blessed Lady. [*She pats his hand.*] Yes, I know your life is hard, dearie, among your books, studying, studying all day and night—

VILLON [*groaning*]. Oh, God!

OLD WOMAN. Will you make Her that little poem now, dearie? You are so clever. Write it for a poor old woman who thanks Her and cannot read or write herself. Just a little poem, dearie, to the blessed, loving Mother of God. Our Lady will bless you for it, and your poor old mother will die so happy, so happy. Say you'll do it, dearie. [VILLON *gazes at her with clenched teeth.*]

VILLON. Yes, mother. I'll do it for you, all right. I'll do it to-night—instead—instead of my other work. [*Awkwardly.*] Will you bless me? [*He goes on one knee. The* OLD WOMAN *blesses him and wipes her eyes on her cloak.*]

VILLON [*rising*]. Now, you must be going, mother. Let me take you to the corner where there's a lamp. Then I must go back to my room. [*He puts his arm round her. They go slowly to the door.*]

OLD WOMAN. [*pausing*]. Are you well wrapped up, dearie? Did you take the cordial? [*She peers.*] Oh, the poor ragged gown! It is so freezing cold. And your poor

weak chest! God be good to poor folk this bitter weather! Let me give you something to wrap—

VILLON. No, no, mother. I'm all right. I shall be seeing Monsieur de Villon again in a day or two. He'll give me a cloak, I expect.

OLD WOMAN [*clasping her hands*]. Ah, the good priest! You are almost like a son to him, dearie.

VILLON [*gulping*]. Yes, mother. [*They go out. Pause. Then* VILLON *returns, blindly, and flings himself on a stool, burying his face in his hands. He rouses in a moment and takes from his doublet, one by one, a pen, an inkhorn, and a scrap of dirty paper.*]

VILLON [*with a groan*]. Mary, Mother of God, forgive me. [*He lapses into meditation, and begins to scribble slowly, pausing frequently and gazing at the roof.*] Lady . . . Queen . . . No. "Lady of Heaven, Regent of the World." Ruler . . . Ruler . . . Ah! "Empress of th' Infernal Marsh." That's the line! [*He begins to grow absorbed in his poetry, and writes more freely in silence. A stealthy figure sidles round the door and advances on tiptoe. It is* COLIN DES CAYEULX.]

CAYEULX. Ss-sst!

VILLON [*starting*]. What—oh, you! [*Pauses, pen in air.*]

CAYEULX [*angrily*]. What are you doing, you damned fool? There's no time to waste! I'm going on now. We'll expect you in ten minutes. Sharp! [*He tiptoes to the door.* VILLON, *pen in hand, gazes after him, his lips moving.*]

VILLON. "Say to your Son that I am His alone" . . . Ah! [*To* CAYEULX.] Ten minutes. All right. All right. I'll be there. [*And so, scribbling fast, concludes the "Ballade que Villon feist a la requeste de sa Mere, pour prier Nostre Dame." The burglary is entirely successful.*]

[CURTAIN]

# CHILDREN'S DAY

# ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF *

By

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

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## CHARACTERS

St. Francis
The Wolf
Children (hardly fewer than four)
A Mother or Mothers

# ST. FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

*A game for children founded on the Legend of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio.*

SONG

[*To be sung by all at the beginning*]

St. Francis was a gentle saint,
That to the birds would preach.
The little fishes in the brooks
Most kindly did he teach.

Such looks of love St. Francis had,
Such friendly looks and wise;
One time he tamed a great gray wolf
By looking in his eyes.

CHILDREN.
Let's pick berries in the woods!
LITTLEST CHILD.
Children, do not go!
CHILDREN.
She's afraid the wolf will eat us up,
The great gray wolf of Gubbio.
[*All run into the woods dragging littlest child with them.*]
MOTHER [*at home—any convenient spot*].
I wonder where my children are?
Where have they gone to play?
St. Francis is coming to Gubbio
To see the folks to-day.

St. Francis is a gentle saint
To the greatest and the least,
He says: "God bless you," to the birds,
"God bless you," to the beast.

CHILDREN [*in the woods—any convenient spot*].
Berries! Berries! [*Bright red berries.*]
Fresh with morning dew.
[*Tauntingly*]
Wolf! Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!
We aren't afraid of you.

WOLF [*appearing with loud howls*].
Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

CHILDREN.
Oh, what shall we do?
[WOLF *chases* CHILDREN.]
Run! Run! Run! Run! Run!
[*They shout this until the* WOLF *steals a child.*]

CHILDREN [*coming home*].
Mother, we've lost our little brother!

MOTHER [*lamenting*].
Children, why did you go?
The great gray wolf has carried him
To the cave of Gubbio!

CHILDREN [*crying*].
The great gray wolf has carried him
To the cave of Gubbio!

ST. FRANCIS [*appears*].
Oh, you folks of this sweet town,
What is the matter with you?

CHILDREN [*leaping around him*].
St. Francis! St. Francis!

MOTHER.
He will tell us what to do!

CHILDREN.
St. Francis, we've lost our little brother!
The wolf snatched him away.

ST. FRANCIS.
Then all ye children come with me
Into the forest gray.
MOTHER.
No! No! No! No!
He will tear them limb from limb.
ST. FRANCIS.
I will look at the wolf with eyes of love
And that will quiet him.
[*They all go to the woods, leaving* MOTHER *at home.*]
MOTHER.
St. Francis is a gentle saint
To the greatest and the least;
He says "God bless you" to the birds,
"God bless you," to the beast.
CHILDREN [*in the forest—with coaxing voices*].
Wolf! Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!
ST. FRANCIS.
Where are you, good gray brother?
My friend, the wolf, I pray you, bring
The little lost child to its mother.
For God loves me, and God loves you,
So let us love each other.
WOLF [*appearing from bushes*].
Is that St. Francis that I hear?
"Brother," he says to me!
They say he preached to the little, good birds,
And now he would preach to me.
[*He stands before* ST. FRANCIS.]
ST. FRANCIS.
Look in my eyes, my Brother, the wolf,
And tell me what you see.
WOLF.
Love! Love! Love! Love!
And I will follow thee.
ST. FRANCIS.
Take the child and bring him back

To his mother in Gubbio.
[WOLF *fetches child.*]
Children, garland the wolf with flowers.

CHILDREN [*obeying*].
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Our dear, kind wolf! Our Brother, the wolf!

WOLF [*approvingly*].
Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!
[*All go home with* WOLF.]

ALL [*as they go*].
St. Francis was a gentle saint,
And little birds did teach.
The great gray wolf grew kind and good
Because he heard him preach.

ST. FRANCIS [*to* MOTHER].
Here is your child.

MOTHER [*embracing child*].
My own little child!
[*To* ST. FRANCIS.]
Oh, friend of all the city!

ST. FRANCIS.
But on this wolf, our Brother, the wolf,
I pray you all, take pity.
Feed him with milk from door to door,
Put hay into his stall.
Be friendly, folks, with your good gray Brother,
Be friendly, Brother, to all.

ALL [*singing*].
St. Francis was a gentle Saint.
He loved the wood and rain;
He talked to the sun and stars and moon
And they talked back again.

Such looks of love St. Francis had,
Such friendly looks and wise;
One time he tamed a great gray wolf
By looking in his eyes.

# A GROUP OF PLAYS ABOUT ULYSSES AND THE GREEKS *

THE WOODEN HORSE
PENELOPE'S VISION
ULYSSES FINDS FRIENDS
ULYSSES' RETURN

By

WOODWARD SCHOOL CHILDREN
AND
CHARLOTTE REED WHITE

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## FOREWORD

Dear Other Children—If you love the old Greeks as we do, you will want to make your own plays as we did. Try our plays and see if they do not give you ideas for your plays.

Before we played we were Greeks, we read many books so that we might become well acquainted with these wonderful people. On the next page you will find a list of some of these books. We talked about the Greeks that interested us, and wrote stories about them. Best of all we drew and painted pictures of the Greeks, their homes, and their activities. Then we pretended we were Greeks. This makes a play.

The plays we have chosen for you are about Ulysses, king of Ithaca, and his long journey to his native land after the siege and destruction of Troy.

AUTHOR.

## LIST OF BOOKS ABOUT THE GREEKS

The Odyssey of Homer—Palmer.
The Story of Ulysses—Agnes Spofford Cook.
The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy—Padraic Column.
The Spartan Twins—Lucy Fitch Perkins.
Thirty More Famous Stories Retold—James Baldwin.
The Story of the Greek People—Eva March Tappan.
Story of Ulysses—M. Clark.
Story of Old Greece—Mary Macgregor.
Story of Mankind—H. Van Loon.
Fables—Bulfinch.

# THE WOODEN HORSE

## STAGING

*Scenery:* Choose a picture from books that looks as you think Troy, with the sea, and the Greek camp, might look. Copy it. Fold in three parts.

Thumbtack butcher paper to your blackboard. Copy your little picture on your large paper with charcoal, the middle and two sides. Paint it with powder paint, which you can buy by the pound and be sure that you mix it with fish-glue, or your scenery will come off.

The Trojan horse is made of beaver-board. Draw it with charcoal, paint it gray and cut it out with short sharp knives. It must be large enough so that many Greeks can crouch behind it. Between the legs put black cambric where the Greeks come out.

*Costumes:* The Greek costumes were loose and simple. We copied some from the Parthenon frieze, using heavy white cheese cloth, and gold-colored cambric for trimming. The men's costumes require a mantle. The women's costumes are straight robes with girdles to make them secure. Any Boy Scout, or Girl Scout can make them.

*Dances:* Use the steps you have learned in your Eurythmics to invent any dances that you need.

*Properties:* In the Wooden Horse you need drums and cymbals. Your stage should be dark for the Fall of Troy. Give each Greek a flashlight covered with red paper, and have a tiny pinch of red light powder burning in a pan behind the scenes.

# THE WOODEN HORSE

## PROLOGUE

SCENE: *Outside the Greek Camp.*

### CHARACTERS

ULYSSES
MINERVA

ULYSSES [*seated, alone and sick at heart*]. "'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. Push off, and sitting well in order, smite The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths of all the western stars, until I die. It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. Though much is taken, much abides; and though we are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and Heaven, that which we are, we are." (Tennyson, "Ulysses.")

MINERVA. Brave Ulysses.

ULYSSES. Oh, wise Goddess. We burnt to you many offerings, praying thy aid. Now Greece fails.

MINERVA. Say not so! The Gods do not fail those whom they protect. Look within thy mind, Ulysses! Does not Jove vouchsafe to thee a plan to capture Troy? [*She fades away.* ULYSSES *thinks.*]

[CURTAIN]

## ACT I

SCENE: *The Greek Camp.*

### CHARACTERS

NESTOR, *oldest of Greek warriors.*
DIOMED, *friend of* ULYSSES.
AGAMEMNON, *Greek general.*
ULYSSES, *King of Ithaca.*
MENELAUS, *who married* HELEN.
SINON, *a Greek Spy.*

NESTOR [*addressing the other Greeks*]. Achilles is dead! A treacherous Trojan shot a poisoned arrow which struck him in the heel, the only part of his body which could be wounded. Without food our army will starve and there is food within those Trojan walls. Why do we not storm those walls? Because Achilles is dead, and the other chiefs have lost heart without him. Now the Greeks are without leaders. Let us give up, and go home. [*Slowly.*] We are defeated.

DIOMED [*springing to his feet*]. Never! Shall Greece drag her honor in the dust! [*Spears clash on shields in applause.*] Greece is never defeated! We cannot bow her proud head. Ten long years of this fierce struggle only to slink home now like craven hounds! If we but prove ourselves men, Great Jove will surely aid us yet. Let us remember brave Achilles and fight till victory is ours! Better death than Greece dishonored. [*They clash their spears against their shields.*]

ULYSSES [*rising*]. Ye know me for a simple soldier whose words have little weight. Without Achilles we cannot hope to weaken Troy's strong walls. Let us fold our tents and place them in our ships. But first we'll make a peace offering to Minerva. Let it be large and strongly built, a monstrous, wooden horse to leave behind us.

SINON. This seems to me too sad a time to take for idle jest, Ulysses.

ULYSSES. Wait. The army will sail out beyond their towers' sight, as far as Tenedos, but Diomed and I will stay behind. At night we'll climb into the horse with men enough to fill its hollow sides. There we will wait until the next night comes.

ALL. Go on. Yes?

ULYSSES. Sinon, the plot now turns to thee. Thou shalt sleep between the horse's feet, and when the Trojans question thee, thou shalt tell them that to drag the horse within Troy's gates means the ruin of Greece. They'll surely drag it in.

MENELAUS. 'Tis only the Gods can make such trick succeed. We'll starve while the Trojans argue, 'tis so strange. And if they heard a whisper of the plan!

ULYSSES. A traitor Greek will meet a traitor's death, Jove aid me.

AGAMEMNON. Ulysses, hope comes again in our faint hearts. Greece's honor is well worth the risk of our poor lives.

ULYSSES. It is a sacred trust.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

SCENE: *In Troy.*

### CHARACTERS

HELEN
THE GODDESS MINERVA
EIGHT TROJAN MAIDENS
LAOCOON, *priest of Ilium*
KING PRIAM

FIRST MAIDEN. Every man in the Greek camp is busy. They have dragged timbers from the forest and have hewn them. Others have worked at the forges.

SECOND MAIDEN. They have worked day and night, and now there is of their building a giant horse, so large that its legs are like the towers on either side of the city gates.

THIRD MAIDEN. It is the Festival of Minerva. Why not drag the Greeks' great horse within our gates, and give it to the wise maiden? [*They dance up to the monster horse, curiously inspecting it.*]

KING PRIAM. Does this bring good to Troy or should it straight be burnt?

LAOCOON. As sure as I am Priam's son and Priest of Ilium there is evil in yon monstrous thing! [*He strikes the horse and it groans.*]

FOURTH MAIDEN. Come away! I feel it is an evil thing.

FIFTH MAIDEN. There is a man asleep between the horse's two huge forefeet.

SIXTH MAIDEN [*shaking* SINON]. Awake! Who art thou?

SINON. My name is Sinon and I am a Greek much hated by Ulysses. I am abandoned by the Greeks, and they have sailed for home.

SEVENTH MAIDEN. Tell us about yonder strange beast; kind Priam may spare thy life.

SINON. The Greeks prayed for a safe voyage home, and made this offering to please Minerva whose image, the Palladium, Ulysses and Diomed stole. We built it of great size to hold it sure without the walls of Troy—for if it enters Troy, according to the oracle, Troy will be free forever and none may conquer her.

LAOCOON. 'Tis folly. I fear the Greeks most when they do bring gifts. [*He goes away.*]

EIGHTH MAIDEN. A judgment falls from heaven upon Laocoon for his impious words. But now two giant serpents from the sea have crushed him and his sons in giant folds.

ALL THE MAIDENS. Come, aid us, Trojans. The giant horse must come within the walls of Troy to-day. [*They drag in the giant horse.*]

[CURTAIN]

## ACT III

SCENE: *Night in Troy.*

### CHARACTERS

HELEN
CASSANDRA, *a seer*
SINON
ALL THE GREEKS AND TROJANS

HELEN [*calls to those whom she suspects are within the horse, imitating their wives' voices*]. Diomed! Diomed! Ulysses! Ulysses! Nestor! Agamemnon! Ulysses! 'Tis thy wife, Penelope, who calls. Menelaus!

CASSANDRA [*approaches as if she were sleepwalking*]. Woe unto Troy! Thou knowest that I am a seer. Although thou wilt not believe me, I see doom with this monstrous creature, doom for Troy. [*All exit except* SINON.]

SINON [*filing the nails*]. Ulysses! Come brave Comrades! All is safe. Troy sleepeth. Here are torches. Now shall Troy fall, and the wrongs of Menelaus be avenged. [*Wild chasing of Trojans, and the sacking of the city.*]

[CURTAIN]

# PENELOPE'S VISION

## STAGING

*Costumes:* You will need the costumes of Greeks. Perhaps you can use brown cambric for the costumes of Ulysses' men. Their costumes are worn with traveling.

*Properties:* The pigs are made large enough to cover you when you are on your hands and knees. Make them of beaver board, paint them, and cut them out. Make an arm-band by threading muslin through two slits in the pig so that it will stand upright. When you begin the second act, have your pigs lying flat on the floor. When Circe says: "Swine they shall be"—let the men drop to their hands and knees, raising their pigs like a shield. They will look like a drove of swine.

*Scenery:* Circe's palace would be interesting to paint with a wide portico and many pillars.

# PENELOPE'S VISION

## ACT I

SCENE: PENELOPE'S *room.*

### CHARACTERS

PENELOPE, *wife of* ULYSSES
TELEMACHUS, ULYSSES' *son*
NURSE
EUMÆUS, *the swineherd*
MINERVA, *or* ATHENE, *the wise goddess*
PENELOPE'S FRIEND
ANTINOUS, *a rude suitor*
SUITORS

NURSE. My lady, you cannot live if you weave all day, and by night undo your day's work.

PENELOPE. Yet must I continue to do so. Once this tapestry is finished, I must choose some one of these princelings to take my dear Ulysses' place. This I cannot do while hope burns in my breast.

TELEMACHUS. My mother, let me aid you, for, once your task is finished, hope is gone. One of these suitors will take my mother, my home, and my father's place. Another will be king of Ithaca.

PENELOPE. My son, I will continue to weave by day and undo my threads at night. I will tell them all to wait. This cloth must be finished first, for my husband's father is aged and may die. He must have a shroud. [*Enter* EUMÆUS.] What is it, Eumæus, faithful servant?

EUMÆUS. A spy hath told the suitors that thou art un-

raveling by night the work that thou weavest by day. Antinoüs is leading them to thy chamber. [SUITORS *burst in the door.*]

ANTINOUS. Ha! Thou cheatest! It is a trick to make us wait, but now thou art discovered.

FIRST SUITOR. She has been unraveling the threads!

SECOND SUITOR. At this rate the shroud would not be finished until *our* death.

THIRD SUITOR. It is a trick to keep us waiting until age claims us!

TELEMACHUS. Dogs! How dare you enter here. Ah, if I were only a man, I would defend my mother. [*He weeps.*]

PENELOPE [*with dignity*]. What are ye Princes, ye who force a way into the chamber of a Queen who guards her solitude. Have ye no shame that ye can stoop to common robber's craft? Go!

ANTINOUS [*threateningly*]. To-morrow's sun must see thy weaving finished. [SUITORS *leave.*]

PENELOPE'S FRIEND. Thou art tired with grief, Penelope. Leave us, good Eumæus, and thou Telemachus. Perchance the Queen will sleep. [*Exit* EUMÆUS *and* TELEMACHUS.]

PENELOPE. Ulysses! Ulysses! Wilt thou ever return! [*She falls asleep. Enter* MINERVA.]

MINERVA. Dream of Ulysses, fair Queen. The Gods have not forgotten thy hero. But heroes must suffer and be proven men. If Ulysses and his companions be brave men and true they will escape all perils. Look in Circe's palace. See what awaits them there. Dream of Ulysses, fair Queen.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

SCENE: *Before* CIRCE'S *palace.*

### CHARACTERS

ULYSSES
EURYLOCHUS, *leader of* ULYSSES' *band*
CIRCE, *an enchantress*
MERCURY, *messenger of the Gods*
CIRCE'S TWO ATTENDING LADIES
EURYLOCHUS' EIGHT MEN

ULYSSES [*addressing his comrades*]. My men, there remain only this little band of all the Greeks who sacked Troy. The Gods try us severely. We escaped the Giant Polyphemus, that fierce Cyclop, who killed two of our number. We were not killed by the fierce man-eaters, but they splintered our ships with huge rocks. What lies before us? Dare we enter yonder palace?

EURYLOCHUS. We must have food. Let us draw lots to see which of us shall lead the men into this strange palace. [*They draw lots by spinning pebbles in a cap.*]

FIRST MAN. The black pebble is for me. The white one is for you, Eurylochus. [*They spin the cap and the white stone goes out.*]

ALL. Eurylochus must go. [*They follow him to* CIRCE'S *palace.*]

EURYLOCHUS. You enter my men. I will wait you here. [CIRCE *comes out of the palace with her two ladies, all singing.*]

FIRST LADY. These men are strangers, Circe. Shall we make them welcome?

CIRCE. They seem not to wait for welcome. But tell them to enter. [*Men rush rudely in to palace to eat.*]

SECOND LADY. Strangers, Circe bids you welcome. Here is fine cheese to eat, and good wine to drink. Be at ease,

good sirs, and be welcome. [ULYSSES' *men eat greedily and push each other.*]

FIRST MAN. This wine is as good as that of dead Polyphemus.

SECOND MAN. Let us stay here always.

THIRD MAN. We feed better here than in Ithaca.

FOURTH MAN. Give me that honey.

FIFTH MAN. Nay, I had it first.

SIXTH MAN. Pass me that flagon of wine.

SEVENTH MAN. You've had your share.

EIGHTH MAN. Hail, lovely Queen, we'll stay here and eat forever.

CIRCE [*with indignation*]. I like not the manners of these men! They betray my hospitality. They are more like swine than men. Swine they shall be! [*She waves her wand over them and they turn into pigs.*] Ye no longer deserve to be men, least of all princes. Off to the sties where ye belong!

MAIDS. Here are acorns and chestnuts, food for swine. [*Pigs run off, grunting.*]

[CURTAIN]

## ACT III

SCENE: *Outside* CIRCE'S *palace.*

### CHARACTERS

ULYSSES
CIRCE
LADIES
MERCURY
ULYSSES' MEN

ULYSSES. Eurylochus, where are my men?

EURYLOCHUS. Your men entered the palace of Circe, the

enchantress. I waited in the portico. A drove of swine went past me. Your men came not. I fear that they have been changed into beasts.

ULYSSES. Thou must go back and rescue them.

EURYLOCHUS. I fear death if thou dost send me there again. Within those palace walls there is the chill of magic. I'm for the boats.

ULYSSES. No. Stay here and guard the boats lest evil come. I'll seek my men. [*He walks away, and meets the winged god* MERCURY.]

MERCURY. 'Tis thy stout heart, Ulysses, that tells thee to save thy comrades. How dost thou know the same ill fate doth not await thyself? [ULYSSES *gazes at him in admiration.*]

ULYSSES. Surely, 'tis the winged Mercury, the messenger of the gods.

MERCURY. Since thou art brave and wise, Ulysses, thou shalt have the charm which the wise goddess bids me bring to you. [*He stoops and plucks a white flower.*] Take this tiny flower and when Circe drugs thy wine, 'twill guard against enchantment if thou hold it fast. Farewell! [*Exit* MERCURY. ULYSSES *enters the palace. He sees* CIRCE *and her maids dancing and singing.*]

CIRCE. Enter, great Ulysses, I know thou art famed for thy wisdom and cunning. Enter. Be seated at thy ease and rest. [*The dance continues, and* CIRCE *pours wine into a cup.*] Drink, Ulysses.

ULYSSES. I drink. [*He holds aloft the tiny white flower.*]

CIRCE [*waving her wand*]. Now join the other swine, Ulysses, King of Ithaca.

ULYSSES. Thy charms cannot harm me. Now shalt thou die, Enchantress.

CIRCE. I did not mean thee harm, Ulysses. I did but try thy heart to know if thou art truly brave and all-enduring. Stay now with me, for thou art welcome here.

ULYSSES [*threatening her with his sword*]. I'll spare

thy life if thou wilt swear by all the Gods thou wilt not do me harm.

CIRCE. I swear it. Stay, Ulysses.

ULYSSES. To prove thy word return to me, now, my men.

CIRCE [*waves her wand and beckons*]. Swine, come forth. [*Pigs enter, grunting and squealing.*] For Ulysses' sake, be no more swine, but men. [ULYSSES *embraces his men.*]

CIRCE. Now stay and feast with us, for my palace is honored by brave Ulysses and his men. Ye are in no danger now. Circe is your friend and will aid thee in thy journey.

[CURTAIN]

# ULYSSES FINDS FRIENDS

*AN OUT-OF-DOOR PLAY*

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Scenery:* This play should be given out-of-doors. Look about you and choose a setting that will make you think of the beautiful country around the Ægean Sea. We chose the Charles River and a smooth green lawn bordered by shrubbery where Ulysses could hide. There was a truly Greek bench there built by some skilled architect who loved the country of Greece and kept some of it for us in white marble. This made a fine Phæacian court. The dances with the colored scarfs and balls, the races, the hurling of the javelins, and the throwing of the discus all found adequate space upon the lawn. You should have seen the javelins and discus fly through the air, for there was a fair wind. Look about you. You may find a perfect setting in and about a city, and if you are fortunate enough to be in the country, you will easily find just what you have in mind.

*Properties:* There is a great deal of Sloyd work in this play. You must make each discus about twelve inches in diameter and of one-half inch wood, heavy enough to throw easily. Paint them, and find a Greek design that means something to you to copy upon each discus. The javelins are about four feet long and need a heavier head-shaped-like spear.

A cart with wheels to carry the maids' clothes to the water's edge is something you can make of beaver board.

*Costumes:* The white costumes of the Greeks must be short for the athletes who take part. The maids who play with the ball need colored scarfs to represent their washing. The King and Queen have crowns of gold and silver stiff paper, and each child has a silver cup to hold the wine

from Medon. The cups you see received from skill in sports are often copies of old Greek cups. You can borrow them. Demodocus' Lyre may be made of paste-board.

A zither played behind the scenes makes a good accompaniment for the blind musician's story.

# ULYSSES FINDS FRIENDS

## ACT I

SCENE: *On the shore, in Phœacia.*

### CHARACTERS

NAUSICAA, *a Phœacian princess*
CHLOE } *her friends*
ARIAS }
SIX MAIDENS
ULYSSES

[NAUSICAA *and her friends are washing their clothes.* ULYSSES *is in the thicket, resting from his battle with the waves.*]

FIRST MAIDEN. How well you planned to have us wash our pretty clothes to-day, Nausicaa.

SECOND MAIDEN. They'll soon be dry by waving in the sun and wind.

NAUSICAA. The king, my father, gave me leave and loaned the wagon with the high red wheels to carry all our robes so that we might wash them.

THIRD MAIDEN. I loved the water cool and fresh, but now I feel the west wind chill upon my flesh.

FOURTH MAIDEN. Come, play at ball with me. You'll soon forget your chill. [*They play with a large purple ball. It should be like a pretty game.*]

NAUSICAA. Catch it, Arias. 'Twill roll into the water!

ARIAS. Alas! I've missed it. Come, Chloe, help me to find it. [*They search among the bushes.*]

CHLOE. I'll help thee! It went among these shrubs. [*Sees* ULYSSES.] Nausicaä! Flee! There's some one hidden here. [*They all run away except* NAUSICAA. ULYSSES *comes out of his hiding place.*]

NAUSICAA. Who art thou, and why art thou hiding here?

ULYSSES. I am a stranger, little maid, forlorn and forsaken by the Gods. I crave thy help.

NAUSICAA. Bring clothes for the stranger. Come to my father's house. There thou shalt find refuge.

FIFTH MAIDEN. Take this mantle, stranger, and wear it. It is the Princess' own cloak.

SIXTH MAIDEN. Come with us. The Phæacians have kind hearts and they will aid thee gladly. [*The maidens collect the clean clothes and start for the palace.* ULYSSES *follows wrapped in* NAUSICAA'S *mantle.*]

## ACT II

SCENE: *A courtyard in Phæacia.*

### CHARACTERS

ULYSSES
KING
QUEEN
QUEEN'S LADY
MEDON, *a cup-bearer to the king*
FOUR MAIDENS
PHÆACIAN BOY
HIS NEIGHBOR
STARTER
LAODAMAS
CLYTONEUS
DEMODOCUS

[*The* KING *and* QUEEN *are seated.* ULYSSES *sits at one side. There are courtiers,* NAUSICAA *and her maidens.*]

QUEEN'S LADY. My Queen, dost thou see yonder stranger? There is something familiar in the look of his robes.

ULYSSES [*walking toward the* QUEEN]. Wilt thou receive a friendless stranger, good queen? [*The* QUEEN *is silent.*]

KING. Stranger, thou hast surprised us, but be welcome. Sit here by our side and drink a cup of wine. Medon, fill our cups from thy bowl.

MEDON [*pours wine in each cup*]. Drink, friends, drink! [*They each pour a little on the ground first as a libation to the Gods.*]

MEDON. To thee, Father Jove, protector of the friendless, we make our offering.

FIRST MAIDEN [*passing the bowl of water and towel to each one*]. Now wash thy hands.

QUEEN. Stranger, I ask thy pardon, but I cannot help but ask thee how thou didst come by thy robe?

ULYSSES. The story is a long one, lady. Another time I'll tell it all. Suffice it now to say the Gods cast me shipwrecked and forlorn upon this shore. As I awoke from my sleep of exhaustion, I saw thy daughter and her maids near by at play. She is so beautiful, said I to myself, she is surely a goddess and a goddess' heart should be generous and kind, so I addressed her. She is a goddess, for she gave me not only clothing, as thou seest, but by her friendship called courage back into my sick heart.

KING. Nausicaa, thou didst a kind thing. A stranger is ever welcome in Phæacia. We'll now engage in sports and when the stranger reaches home he'll tell his people of our prowess in the games.

ALL. Aye! Aye! Let us try the games. A race! a race!

BOY. Laodamas will win the race.

NEIGHBOR. I'll wager thee my discus that Clytoneus wins it.

BOY. Clytoneus! You cannot compare the two. Laodamas is a stone the heavier.

NEIGHBOR. A runner should be built like a hound, not like the bear.

STARTER. On your marks! Set! Go! [*They race.*]

FIRST MAIDEN. Clytoneus is ahead!

SECOND MAIDEN. No, 'tis Laodamas!

THIRD MAIDEN. Laodamas will win by a javelin's length. See, he wins!

ALL. Laodamas wins! [LAODAMAS *kneels before the* QUEEN *who places the laurel wreath, the sign of victory, upon his brow.*]

QUEEN. To thee belongs the laurel.

KING. Now let us throw the javelin. [*The young men each throw the javelin and* CLYTONEUS *wins.*]

ALL. Clytoneus wins! [*He kneels before the* QUEEN.]

QUEEN. To thee belongs the laurel.

LAODAMAS. Let us ask the stranger to join in our games. He has long thigh muscles, a broad chest and strong arms.

CLYTONEUS. Why not challenge him in the name of his people?

LAODAMAS. Ho, stranger, wilt thou hurl the discus and so show the strength of thy land. Surely there is no greater glory than that a man gains by his own might.

ULYSSES. Bait me not, young man, with a challenge. I am weary and sad of heart as I think of my far-off home.

CLYTONEUS. Fear maketh the heart sad and cold. Perhaps thou art a merchant, a trade where strength is not a needful thing.

ULYSSES. Young man, thy speech is rude from youth to age, and doth provoke me. I am weak from trouble, but I will hurl the discus away from me as I do hurl your taunt that I am craven. [*They hurl the discus.* ULYSSES *hurls his much the farthest.*]

LAODAMAS. Ho! Ho! Clytoneus, the stranger's discus must have had wings and flown away from thine.

ULYSSES. Now I challenge all, for I can hurl my second

twice as far. Besides, if you fear not my age and weariness, I'll wrestle, box, or run with any man of ye.

KING. Stranger, thou hast the right to challenge any man of us, for none denies thy strength. But harmony is the sweet friend of hospitality. Now, Laodamas, call thy friends into the dance. The stranger still may find that we have graceful dancers. [*The young men dance. The others clap the time softly.*]

ULYSSES. Ah, that is dancing to delight my heart. The bending, leaping, twisting and the quickening steps stir my tired heart to leaping rhythm.

CLYTONEUS. Forgive my rude taunt, stranger, I am shamed by thy courtesy. Accept my wreath of laurel, 'tis thine by right.

ULYSSES. May the Gods grant thee fair fortune always, young man.

KING. And now, Demodocus, sing to us. Thou canst not see this sunny world and so art not deceived about it.

DEMODOCUS [*playing on a lyre*]. I sing of the great Ulysses, King of Ithaca. His pledge took him to aid Menelaus to recover fair Helen whom Paris carried away to Troy. The great Greeks who went with him laid siege to Troy for ten long years. His brother Agamemnon, king of men, fierce Achilles, who slew Hector, and the aged Nestor, famed for his wise thought, fought bravely. In vain. They could not capture the city. Then Ulysses with his wily plan saved them. They built a huge wooden horse, and tricked the Trojans into drawing it within the gates of Troy. Night came. Ulysses and his men burst forth. They came from within the wooden horse, and braved the fight. Ulysses won the day. Ulysses, the wise and the brave! [ULYSSES *weeps secretly.*]

ALL. Again! Again!

KING. Enough of song, good Demodocus. Good stranger, art thou not that Ulysses of whom our blind musician sings?

ULYSSES. I am that unhappy man.

KING. Brave Ulysses, go now with our young men. They'll give thee food and place thee in a barque that's sound to carry thee on home.

ALL. Aye, aye! We'll aid thee, brave Ulysses.

KING. Drink to the stranger's safe journey, for he goes now. [MEDON *pours the wine in their cups.*]

ALL. Farewell, Ulysses.

ULYSSES. Farewell, my friends. Farewell, good Queen. May the Gods grant long life and happiness to thee and thine. [*He leaves, laden with gifts.*]

NAUSICAA. Farewell, brave Ulysses. When thou hast reached thy home, remember us.

[CURTAIN]

# ULYSSES' RETURN

## STAGING

*Costumes:* The suitors should be rather richly dressed, with head bands and girdles painted with jewels.

The herdsmen, and Eumæus, need ragged robes and staves to tend their flocks. The beggars are ragged, too.

*Scenery:* Find a picture of a Greek courtyard to copy for your scenery.

*Properties:* You will have to make a huge bow. Your manual training teacher will help you, and will give you patterns for the shields and swords used then.

# ULYSSES' RETURN

## ACT I

SCENE: ULYSSES' *Palace in Ithaca.*

### CHARACTERS

PENELOPE, ULYSSES' *queen*
NURSE
ULYSSES

[ULYSSES *dressed like a beggar is seated in the courtyard. Enter* PENELOPE.]

PENELOPE. Nurse, bring a bench and a fleece for the stranger. I wish to speak with him. [*Turns to the beggar.*] Tell me who thou art, thy name, thy race and thy country.

ULYSSES. Question me not, fair Lady, I am a man of sorrow, but to grieve always will not make me more endure.

PENELOPE. I, too, have sorrowed long. Ulysses has been gone these twenty years, and soon the time will come when I must choose one of these lords of Ithaca. For they devour the substance of our house and soon my son, Telemachus, will be impoverished. Tell me of thy trials. Perhaps you have heard news of our lost King.

ULYSSES. I will tell a part:

. . . I am become a name
For always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known, cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all:

And drunk delight of battle with my peers
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch, wherethro'
Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever as I move;
. . . yearning . . .
To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
(Tennyson, "Ulysses.")

NURSE. Stranger, let me bathe thy feet for thou art like our lost Ulysses.

ULYSSES. Yes, they say that I am like him. [*Starts, for he remembers the scar on his foot.*]

NURSE. Thou hast the scar of the boar's tooth, Ulysses received when he was but a boy. Thou art Ulysses!

ULYSSES. Hush! Woman, say nothing. Be silent lest my enemies too soon discover me.

NURSE. No word shall I say. I can keep a secret.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

SCENE: *Courtyard of palace.*

### CHARACTERS

SEVEN MAIDENS
TELEMACHUS, ULYSSES' *son*
ULYSSES
EUMÆUS, *the swineherd*
ANTINOUS, *a suitor*
MINERVA
GOATHERD
HERDSMAN

OTHER SUITORS
PENELOPE
IRUS, *a beggar*

[MAIDS *dancing as they prepare the room for the day.*]

FIRST MAID. Come, let us prepare the house for the day. Kindle the fire.

SECOND MAID. It bids fair to be fresh and cool. I'll sweep the house.

THIRD MAID. I'll heap the cushions where their lordly selves may sit.

FOURTH MAID [*sponging off the tables*]. I liked better to serve the brave Ulysses than this sorry court.

FIFTH MAID. The Queen grows sadder. She gives up hope.

SIXTH MAID. And the brave young Telemachus. He will lose his kingdom. [*They arrange flowers.*]

SEVENTH MAID. Ah, if Ulysses would come home from Greece. Ss'h, they come. [*Enter* NURSE *and* TELEMACHUS.]

TELEMACHUS. Nurse, help me take these spears down from the wall to oil their sides. They have the stain of smoke and rust upon them. These were not my father's ways. [*Four maids pass through the courtyard with jars of water on their heads. Woodcutters come in, and* EUMÆUS. ULYSSES *dressed as a beggar comes in and sits at the gate.*]

EUMÆUS [*to beggar*]. Old man, hast thou found ease? I see that Argos, the old hound of lost Ulysses, wags his tail at thee. Thou dost not fear these rude men, or do they still insult thee?

ULYSSES. I fear them, but the Gods will punish them.

GOATHERD [*to beggar*]. Thou art not gone from here yet! I'll help thee with my fists, and drag thee off.

HERDSMAN. Old man, I'll take thy part. It may be that our lost Ulysses is in such evil plight as thou art, and doth beg his way.

ULYSSES. Ulysses will return.

HERDSMAN. Ah, stranger, would that it might be so. [*Enter suitors,* EUMÆUS *and herdsmen serve them.* TELEMACHUS *serves* ULYSSES.]

TELEMACHUS. Rest here and eat thy food. And if I am but strong enough, I'll see thou hast peace.

ANTINOUS. You want a share, old beggar? Take this. I give it willingly. [*He flings his footstool which strikes* ULYSSES.]

TELEMACHUS. An insult to a stranger here within my father's house! Oh, would I were a man, and might protect thee. [SUITORS *laugh.*]

MINERVA [*appears disguised as an old man*]. Death seeks ye, wretched men. I see ye soaking in your blood. Now sets your sun and ye go hastening to your doom. [*She fades away.*]

FIRST SUITOR. Telemachus, have we a lack of vagabonds and nasty beggars in our midst that ye insist this mar-feast have his rights! Hast thou forgot thou art a king's own son?

IRUS. Get thee gone, old man, or I shall drag thee out.

ULYSSES. It is not fitting that I should fight thee, for I am an old man.

ANTINOUS. Coward, I call for a trial of strength between beggars. [ULYSSES *fells* IRUS. *Enter* PENELOPE *with* ULYSSES' *great bow.*]

PENELOPE. Princes, I offer you the mighty bow of lost Ulysses. The one of you who soonest sends the shaft through twelve axes' heads, him will I wed and only in my dreams remember this my bridal home.

TELEMACHUS. I will try first, for if I am strong enough to bend my father's bow, then I may safely guard my mother and my home. [*He lays aside his cloak, and tries to bend the bow. He fails, drops it and sighs.*] I am too young to wield my father's arms. Come, stronger men, and end this contest. [SUITORS *try to bend the bow.*]

THIRD SUITOR. The string cuts my hand, I cannot bend it.

ANTINOUS. Light a fire. I'll soften it in oil, and then I'll bend it. [*He oils it, and the suitors try to bend it.* ULYSSES *calls his men while they are busy doing this.*]

ULYSSES. Friends, if Ulysses should appear to you suddenly, would you aid him?

HERDSMAN. We would obey him gladly did the Gods but give him back.

ULYSSES. I am he! That ye may believe me here is a sign. [*They gaze at the scar of the boar's teeth with joy.*] Rejoice not, go and find weapons. Thou, Eumæus, tell the women to lock the doors of their rooms, and do thou secure the gates of the courtyard.

FOURTH SUITOR. Alas, we are so inferior in strength to Ulysses that we cannot bend his bow.

ANTINOUS. This is the feast day of Apollo, god of archery. He will not let us bend the bow. We are not weaklings. Lay it aside until to-morrow. [*They lay the bow aside.*]

ULYSSES. Antinoüs, wilt thou let me take the bow to prove my skill and vigor, for I fear that wanderings and neglect have left me weak.

ANTINOUS. Impudent beggar! Thy brain hath been crazed by too much wine. Touch the bow and thou wilt wish thou hadst not!

ALL THE SUITORS. The beggar shall not touch the bow!

TELEMACHUS. For shame! 'Tis my right to give or to refuse the bow. Let my mother and her maidens withdraw to their household cares, and leave the contest of arms to men. [*Exit* PENELOPE *and all the women.*] I say the beggar shall try the bow. Eumæus, give it to the stranger. [EUMÆUS *takes it but drops it as the* SUITORS *threaten him.*] Eumæus, beware thou dost not serve too many masters. [EUMÆUS *gives the bow to the beggar.*]

FIRST SUITOR. This beggar has a shrewd eye for the bow.

SECOND SUITOR. See how skillfully he handles it, as if he had as good a one at home.

ULYSSES. Telemachus, thy guest doth not shame thee. Now the trial is ended, and these arrows shall find their goal. [*He slays* ANTINOUS.]

SUITORS. Shame on thee, beggar. Thou hast slain him!

ULYSSES. Dogs, ye thought I would not return to my home, and so ye did me evil in my house. But now the hour has come! [*He shoots another* SUITOR.]

THIRD SUITOR. Brothers, we will be too many for him yet.

MINERVA [*appears behind* ULYSSES, *disguised as Menbor*]. Strike, Ulysses, for I am here.

ULYSSES [*as the last* SUITOR *drops*]. Their own evil has ended them.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT III

SCENE: *Courtyard of* ULYSSES' *palace.*

### CHARACTERS

ULYSSES
PENELOPE
EUMÆUS
NURSE
MAIDS AND HERDSMEN

[MAIDS *and* HERDSMEN *are welcoming* ULYSSES.]

NURSE. My queen, it is the master.

PENELOPE. Good nurse, it cannot be.

ULYSSES. Good lady, thy long grief has cost thee thy soft heart. Ask then thy nurse to give the stranger but a bed within the court since my own wife will not admit me to my home.

PENELOPE. Nay, I am not hard of heart if I could now believe. But the court is a goodly place. Nurse, move his bed here, and, because the wind is chill, heap it with warm, soft fleeces.

ULYSSES. Woman, thou knowest my bed cannot be moved. Thou knowest 'tis built around a live olive tree, and not ten men, nor twenty, could move it. I inlaid it, also, heavily with silver and gold and ivory. Thou knowest that this is so.

PENELOPE. Now at last I know thou art Ulysses. [*Dance of welcome by household.*]

[CURTAIN]

# LABOR DAY

# DAILY BREAD *

By

MARY KATHARINE REELY

*"All life moving to one measure—*
*Daily bread, daily bread—"*
—W. W. Gibson.

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## CHARACTERS

JOHN BOYD
MRS. BOYD
ALICE
MRS. SCHULTZ, *a neighbor*
MISS DAVIS, *a friendly visitor*

# DAILY BREAD

SCENE: *The Boyds' kitchen-living room, in a four-family tenement in a mid-western city. It is a home of clean, respectable poverty. The room is furnished with a cook stove, table that is partly set, ready for a meal, a high bureau which stands against the rear wall, and several chairs. The door which opens onto the hallway is at the upper right.*

MRS. BOYD, *a slight, quick-moving woman, is humming softly as she busies herself about the room. Hurrying to the cook stove, she takes the lid off a stew kettle, sniffs, nods her head and smiles with the air of one well pleased. The outer door opens.*

MRS. BOYD [*over her shoulder*]. Is it you, Allie? [ALICE, *a thin-shouldered little girl of about thirteen, enters with her school books.* ALICE *sniffs.*] Don't it smell good? [ALICE *walks over to the stove, lifts the lid off the kettle.*]

ALICE. Why, it's real old Irish stew, Ma!

MRS. BOYD. Indeed, and that's what it is.

ALICE. With meat!

MRS. BOYD. Sure, for it's good and hungry your Pa will be when he gets home from his job.

ALICE [*taking off her cap and gray sweater and dropping her books on the table*]. It's nice to have Pa with a job again, isn't it, Ma?

MRS. BOYD. Indeed it is! And wasn't he the proud man, going off to his work this morning! [*Glancing at clock on bureau.*] He'll be late coming home, I'm thinking. It's a long walk from the mills, and he'll be thinking he

can't spend the nickel for carfare—him having been out of work so long. Where's the boys—they're late.

ALICE. They went to the Settlement for their gym class. [*Opening one of her school books.*] Ma, dear, I brought home my report card. [*Offering it shyly.*]

MRS. BOYD [*wiping her hands on her apron. Running her finger down the card, she half murmurs to herself*]. Excellent—Excellent—Reading, Excellent—Spelling, Excellent—Arithmetic—Why, Alice, darlin', you're falling off here! You're only getting a mark of Good in your 'rithmetic, when by rights you ought to have Excellents in all of 'em. [*Suddenly taking the girl's thin cheeks between her hands.*] You darling! It's a great scholar you are, and it's a proud man your Pa will be when he comes home from his work, and sees this! Put it up now on the bureau, so's he can see it first thing when he comes in and sign his name to it. It's so pleased he is that he can keep you in school till you graduate—now that he has his job. [MRS. BOYD *goes back to the stove where she busies herself.* ALICE *places the card on the bureau.*]

ALICE. I met Miss Davis down the street. She said maybe she'd stop in. She was awfully pleased that Pa went to his job this morning.

MRS. BOYD. Well, it's through her, bless her, that he has a job to go to.

ALICE. She says it's a good place to work—the mills. They treat you right there.

MRS. BOYD. Well, of course the pay ain't what your Pa's been used to—but it's better than nothing these days—and he was glad to get it, poor man, having been out of work so long.

ALICE. You won't be going with Mrs. Schultz now, will you, Ma?

MRS. BOYD. No, not now, Allie. You might be setting the plates around, dear. Not but what I'd be glad to go—with a few nights' work we could get caught up again—but your Pa don't like the idea. He's sort of old-fashioned in

his notions, your Pa—"It's a poor man that can't support his own family," he says—but God save us, what's a man going to do these times if he can't get a job! 'Tain't his fault, poor dear!

ALICE. Just the same, I'm glad you're not going out, Ma. I'd hate for you to take to night scrubbing like Mrs. Schultz. Maybe I could get a job, Ma, then you wouldn't need to. Next month I'll be fourteen. I could get a permit.

MRS. BOYD. Now, now, child, don't you talk about getting a job! You with that fine report card! Well, God be praised we don't neither of us need to be talking of work now that your Pa has his job. Hark! Is that himself so soon? [*Hastens to the door. There are voices outside. One* (MISS DAVIS) *calls out as* MRS. BOYD *opens the door.*]

MISS DAVIS. What am I going to do about it, Mrs. Boyd? I was coming in to see you and here's Mrs. Schultz saying I owe her a call!

MRS. BOYD. Sure and you'll both come in and pay me a visit together. Come in, Mrs. Schultz.

MISS DAVIS [*appearing at the door. She is a good-looking young woman, dressed in a stylish but plain and business-like suit*]. How are you, Mrs. Boyd? Hello, Alice. [MRS. SCHULTZ, *a large stolid-looking woman follows her into the room. Both visitors sniff the air.*] Um! Something good!

MRS. SCHULTZ. Onions!

MRS. BOYD. It's the stew, ready for his supper when he comes home from his work.

MRS. SCHULTZ. So your man's working again. I seen him going off this morning. [*Seats herself heavily in a chair near the table.*] I just been out for a few rolls to eat with my coffee before I go to my work. [*To* MRS. BOYD.] So you won't be coming along now?

MRS. BOYD. No, not now. He wouldn't like it—and of course it isn't so necessary—now that he is working again. [*To* MISS DAVIS.] Thanks to you! Now lay off your coat, Miss Davis, and you, Mrs. Schultz. I'm going to make

you a cup of tea. He won't be coming in for a while yet.

MISS DAVIS. Oh, I can't stay. I've really got to run down to Fourth Avenue to look up Annie Tierney—they say she's given up her place in the store and taken to running the streets again.

MRS. BOYD. You don't say? Well, she was always a light headed little thing—and not having any training of any kind. But you can look her up to-morrow. I'm sure it's enough you've done for one day. Allie, dear, take Miss Davis's coat.

MISS DAVIS. Mrs. Boyd, you spoil me! Never mind, dear, I'll put it here. [*Hangs coat over back of chair.*]

MRS. BOYD. Now, Mrs. Schultz, lay off your coat.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Well, I don't mind if I do. Allie, put them rolls I brought out on a plate. We might as well all eat here together sociable like, eh, Miss Davis?

MRS. BOYD. That's a fine idea. [ALICE *takes the cinnamon rolls out of the bag and puts them on a plate. Brings cups.*]

MISS DAVIS. I heard something about you, Alice.

ALICE. Me?

MISS DAVIS. Umph-um! Met Miss Mayberry.

ALICE [*with a little laugh*]. Oh!

MRS. BOYD. Well, I guess it ain't anything very bad you'd be hearing about Alice from her teacher.

MISS DAVIS. Oh, it might be worse—she says that Alice is a very promising pupil!

ALICE. Just the same she gave me a scolding to-day.

MISS DAVIS [*with exaggerated seriousness*]. Alice, I'm ashamed of you.

MRS. BOYD. And what were you doing to deserve a scolding, I'd like to know?

ALICE. I didn't do anything.

MISS DAVIS [*still assuming a very reproving manner*]. Now, Alice, that isn't true! You know you must have been doing something very naughty.

ALICE. Well, we had clay modeling to-day, and I made

a little clay man that Myrtle Burns thought very funny, and she giggled, and then Miss Mayberry said: [*imitating*] Alice, I am surprised. I look to you to set a better example to the class. [*Giggles.*]

MISS DAVIS. Alice! If that's the way you spend your time in school, we'll have to—make an artist out of you!

MRS. BOYD [*pouring the tea and handing about the cups*]. Well, if the teachers never had any more worry than what Alice gives them, they'd be having an easy time of it! With the boys now it is different.

MISS DAVIS. Where are the boys?

MRS. BOYD. Alice was saying they went over to the Settlement. They're late coming home.

MISS DAVIS. Oh, yes; there's a basket ball game on tonight—no telling what time they'll be here. By the way, send Billy over Saturday afternoon. I have a job for him. Oberman, the florist, wants an extra boy to deliver—he'll pay fifty cents. I say, Mrs. Schultz, these things are awfully good. [*Holding up a roll.*]

MRS. SCHULTZ. Yes, I usually buys them to eat with my coffee before I goes to my work. . . . Two of them makes a good meal.

MISS DAVIS. But, Mrs. Schultz, you ought to have something more nourishing—working the way you do.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Ach, don't you go worrying about me. I eat enough all right.

ALICE [*who is hanging over the back of her mother's chair*]. But it isn't the amount you eat—it's the calories. [*She speaks very learnedly.*]

MRS. BOYD. Listen to her!

MISS DAVIS. Bright girl, Alice; we'll make a dietitian out of you.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Calories, is it? Yes, I heard all about that already—at the Settlement. A lady was talking about what she call "calories,"—and I thought it was some kind of a vegetable, like carrots, or kohlrabi, maybe—but when she says a man should eat fourteen hundred or some such

number a day! Ach, Himmel! I thinks, he'd bust! [ALICE *giggles and the others laugh.*]

ALICE. But, Mrs. Schultz, a calorie isn't something to eat, it's—it's—well, it's the food value in what you eat.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Yes, I got that idea all right—it's something like these here germs they talk about. [ALICE *and* MISS DAVIS *are again convulsed.*] You know too much; [*shaking her finger at* ALICE] if you was my girl, you would go to work. You're old enough. First thing your Ma knows, you will up and get married—and then what good will she have of you?

MRS. BOYD. Now, don't you be putting silly ideas in her head. Allie she isn't going to be thinking of work for a year or two yet.

MISS DAVIS. We aren't going to let Alice go to work. Miss Mayberry wants her to go to the Vocational High School.

MRS. BOYD. Yes, that's what her Pa would like, to send her on to high school—and now that he's working again—Have another cup, Miss Davis—wish I could offer you some of the stew, but it's got to be saved for himself—he'll be good and hungry, poor man that ain't had a decent meal for weeks. "What we can't pay for we won't have," he says. And the boys will be good and hungry too, little tykes! It's been hard on them with never a bite of meat in the house. Us women folks do very well on bread and tea—but men, the poor dears, need feeding.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Well, I guess you're lucky you ain't got more to feed. What would you do if you had six like I had? That's what I says to the lady over to the Settlement that talked about making what she called a "budget." You remember that already, Miss Davis? Showing us how to live on our incomes. She kept all the time talking about the "average American family." The average American family, she says, ought to live comfortable on $1,200 a year. And I says to her, What is it, the average American family, I says. And, the average American family, she

says, is a husband, a wife and three children. And I says to her, How about it when you got six? And she kind of didn't have nothing more to say.

MRS. BOYD. Well, then, I've got the "Average American family," have I? So if I only had the $1,200, I'd be all right! but I ain't been having it this year, by a long sight!

MISS DAVIS. Well, that's all over now—now that Mr. Boyd is working again.

MRS. SCHULTZ. I surely never had no twelve hundred neither when mine was growing—and when they was old enough to be a help, off they go and get married and start it all over again. It's foolishness I says to them. Now you got jobs for yourselves you got it pretty good. You go and get married and then your troubles begin. Any poor man that gets married and tries to raise a family is a fool, I says to them. But you can't talk sense to young people.

MISS DAVIS. Now, Mrs. Schultz, you don't mean that. You're glad you had your children, you know you are.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Small comfort they ever was to me.

MRS. BOYD. Sure and she don't mean it. She wouldn't give up her children any more than I would mine.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Did you feel that way last week and the week before that when your man had no work?

MRS. BOYD [*thoughtfully*]. It is hard to see them do without—maybe it is better not to have them at all than it is to see them do without. And to take them away from their studies to put them to work for you.

ALICE [*slipping up to her mother*]. Ma, dear, don't talk that way. You know I'd love to go to work for you.

MISS DAVIS. But we needn't talk about that now, need we?

MRS. SCHULTZ. Well, you take care of your children, and they should ought to turn around and do for you. Well, I must be off to my scrubbing. So you won't be coming along? I am sorry—Mrs. Atkins—her that's been working along with me on the top floor—has laid off. Her time is almost here.

MRS. BOYD. Ah, the poor dear.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Working right up to the last minute almost—you should not ought, I says to her—but what can she do? Her man's been sent up to the workhouse for vagrancy—and there's three others besides the one that's on the way.

MISS DAVIS. She is horribly independent—she wouldn't have help.

MRS. SCHULTZ. Well, I'm sorry you're not coming along. [*Puts on her coat.*] Any time you want a night's work—it's not so bad—them tile floors is easy to clean—only on the knees it is bad—well, so long.

MISS DAVIS. Wait, I'll go with you.

MRS. BOYD. Sure, dear, I wish you could wait and see him when he comes home—he'll want to tell you about his job—after your getting it for him and all.

MISS DAVIS [ALICE *helping her into her coat*]. I would like to see him—but then I know it's all right. He has a good place. I'm always glad when I get a man into the flour mills. You know, really I get awfully discouraged sometimes. So much of the work we do seems trifling—but when I find a man a job, then I think I've done something! [*A heavy step outside—a hand on the door.*]

MRS. BOYD. It's himself! Alice, clear the table, fix his place. [*Instead of going to the door to meet him, she darts to the stove. The door opens*—JOHN BOYD *stands there. The four women look at him silently. He advances into the room.*] My God, man—your job?

ALICE. Pa, dear, sit down. [*Pushes him toward a chair—he sinks into it, his hands, holding his hat, drooping between his knees.*]

MISS DAVIS [*with professional briskness*]. Mr. Boyd! What is it?

MRS. BOYD. Man, dear—is it your job?

JOHN BOYD [*harshly*]. I've got no job!

MRS. BOYD [*under her breath*]. My God!

MISS DAVIS. Didn't they save the place for you? They promised. I'll call them up.

MRS. BOYD. John, dear. Speak up. Tell us. Didn't they save the place? Tell Miss Davis. She'll fix it.

JOHN BOYD. She can't.

MISS DAVIS. I certainly can. I'll go and call up at once. They promised me the place. Mr. Sear himself promised. I'll go call him up now—at his house.

JOHN BOYD. It's not him—it's me! It's me! Do you hear? I'm no good. I'm played out. There's no strength in me! [*Lifting his arm.*] Look at that! There's no strength in me arm!

MRS. BOYD. But, man, man—of course, when you haven't had a decent meal in you for weeks—of course not—wait till you get some of this stew inside of you. Alice, bring a dish. John, dear, smell it—smell the good old Irish stew, with onions, John. To-morrow you'll be a new man—to-morrow you'll show them!

JOHN BOYD. There'll be no to-morrow, I tell you! I'm laid off—laid off—laid off at three o'clock this afternoon—because I hadn't the strength in me arms to hold a shovel—here's another man in my place—a young man.

MRS. BOYD [*to* MISS DAVIS]. Can't you do something?

MISS DAVIS. We'll do something to-morrow. We'll find something lighter. It's heavy work, shoveling wheat—something light till you get your strength back again. Now eat Mrs. Boyd's nice supper, and to-morrow come to see me.

JOHN BOYD [*turning on her fiercely*]. What for? [*Looking away again hopelessly.*] She means well.

MISS DAVIS [*trying not to lose her professional composure*]. Mrs. Boyd, send your husband—[*Looks at the hopeless figure and drops her confident pose.*] Send Billy over Saturday. I have a half day's work for him. [*Turns abruptly and goes out the door.*]

MRS. SCHULTZ [*moving slowly after her. At the door*]. I'll be going to my work in ten minutes or so. [*She speaks impersonally, addressing no one in particular.*]

MRS. BOYD. Oh, yes. In ten minutes. [*The family is left alone—three desperately discouraged figures.* MRS. BOYD *pulls herself together.*] Now John, dear, sit up to the table—Allie, bring a clean cup—and be having some of this nice stew—don't it smell good, John? Smell the onion—and there's carrots in it, John—and potatoes—and the nice bit of meat, John. Think of that!

JOHN BOYD [*lifting his head*]. Who's paying for it?

MRS. BOYD. Well, you see, John, I got credit—I said I'd be paying on Saturday.

JOHN BOYD. You said you had a man with a job. You said that you had a man that would earn money. Who's going to pay for it now?

MRS. BOYD. Well, you see, John, it's like this. Mrs. Schultz, she's been after me. You don't know how that woman's been after me—pestering the life out of me. And it's for Mrs. Atkins, the poor dear that's been working with her—and she's laid off, poor thing, expecting her baby almost any day now—and it's to save the place for her. Think of it, John, the poor woman's been working right up to the last week—and it's to save the place, you see, till she's strong again—she needs it so bad with her husband in the Works and another mouth to be fed. Ain't it nice, John, we've only got three—the average American family. Here, John, is your stew. Now draw up and eat. Allie, bring your Pa his tea. So I gave in at last. Yes, I says to Mrs. Schultz, to save the place for her, I'll go. So you see it's a gay one I'm going to be—staying out till midnight, John. What do you know about that now? It's a fine easy place to work, Mrs. Schultz says—all tile floors and no trick at all to clean—and good pay—a dollar seventy-five and carfare for just one evening—think of that, John. John, dear, taste that stew.

JOHN BOYD [*dully*]. They turned me off at three o'clock with a dollar and a half.

MRS. BOYD. And we'll be putting that away with the

rent money. With what Billy will earn Saturday 'twill help a lot. Allie, dear, wrap up a clean apron for me. [*She fetches a shabby coat and hat.*]

JOHN BOYD. Where are you going?

MRS. BOYD. Why, John, darlin', I have been telling you. I'm going out with Mrs. Schultz to the cleaning. [*Going behind his chair, she pats his arm.*] You don't mind, John, dear? It's going to be a great lark. Me that stays in the house so much! Think of seeing the inside of them big offices, John. You don't mind, darling?

JOHN BOYD [*harshly*]. It don't matter. Nothing matters. I'm done for. I can't support my family. I'm done. I'm old—old.

MRS. BOYD [*taking the paper parcel from* ALICE]. Listen to the man, and him just turned forty! But John, dear, that is an old-fashioned notion you got. It's all the style now for married women to work—it's called being economically independent. I heard about it at the Settlement. Sure, John, you want your wife to be up-to-date. John, dear, eat your supper—it's getting all cold. [MRS. SCHULTZ *opens the door—stands waiting.*] I'm all ready. [*She starts for the door—then looks with loving compassion at her husband.*] Oh, the dear man, he's taking it so hard. [*With a little bird-like flight she kisses him on the cheek.*] Man, dear. Man, dear. [*Turns away.*] Allie, darling, coax your Pa to eat. Say something to cheer him up. [*At the door.*] Allie, dear, show him your report card! [*Nods at the happy thought and goes out, closing the door.*]

ALICE [*looking wistfully at her father, speaks in imitation of her mother*]. Pa, dear. Eat your stew. Don't it smell good—don't the onions smell good? [*He makes no response. She looks discouraged at the failure of her first effort. Then she tiptoes over to the bureau and takes down her report card. With it clasped in her hands she advances slowly—wrung to the heart by her father's grief, she flies*

*to him, throws her arms around his neck.*] Pa, darlin', don't you take it that way, don't. Next month I can get a job, then it'll be all right—[*Murmuring, with her cheek against his.*] It will be all right. [*The man's shoulders sink lower.*]

[CURTAIN]

# FIXIN'S *

*THE TRAGEDY OF A TENANT-FARM WOMAN*

By

ERMA AND PAUL GREENE

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## CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 8th and 9th, 1924.

ED ROBINSON, *a young tenant farmer* ...Charles Pritchett
LILLY ROBINSON, *his wife* .....Frances Gray
JIM COOPER, *his landlord* .....Aubrey Shackell

SCENE: *The kitchen of the Robinson farmhouse in Eastern North Carolina.*
TIME: *The present. An Autumn evening, about half-past six o'clock.*

# FIXIN'S

SCENE: *The kitchen of the Robinson home, the bare cold room of a tenant farmer. In the rear wall is a door leading to the outside, a small window to the right of it. A door on the left leads into the only other room of the house, both a bedroom and sitting room. At the right is a cooking stove, and in the center of the room is an eating-table made of rough timbers and covered with a checkered oil-cloth. Between the table and the wall is an old-fashioned bench. There is a chair near the table and another near the stove.*

*The scene opens with* ED ROBINSON *preparing supper at the stove. He is a stockily-built man of twenty-five or thirty, with a plain, honest face, but a face that shows strength and will and maybe a violent passion when aroused. His movements with the supper are awkward and detached, showing that he is unused to the job of cooking and, too, that he is thinking of something besides his present task. He is dressed in overalls, a rough jacket, and heavy shoes. As he is cutting the meat, steps are heard on the porch. He stops and listens. The door is pushed slowly open, and* JIM COOPER, *a broad-shouldered pushing, genial man, past middle-age, comes in. He is blunt and outspoken.*

COOPER. Heigho, Ed, havin' it all by yerself, uh?

ED [*turning from the stove*]. Why, how you, Mr. Cooper? Come in and have a che'r. [*He pushes a chair towards* COOPER *who sits at the left of the table.*]

COOPER [*looking around the room*]. Thanks. Sort o' lonesome here by yerself, you know, ain't it, Ed? [*Hur-*

*riedly.*] Course some folks likes it that-a-way . . . but . . .

ED. Yeh, 'tain't no picnic mebbe. . . . [*He lapses into gloomy silence, stares at his knife-handle a moment, then begins putting the meat quickly into the pan, stirring around as if anxious to forget something that is worrying the life out of him.*]

COOPER. Well, I thought I'd come over and have a settlement about the cotton before you got off some'r's or went to sleep. [*Watching him closely.*] But you ain't no night-hawk fer traveling, are you?—Not lately anyhow.

ED. Nope, I stick clost about. [*He taps on the pan with the knife-blade.*]

COOPER. You shore do, and that's the God's truth. But just because she's gone off making a fool of herself, you needn't. [ED *straightens up and stands listening, threatening.*] Never mind—'scuse me, Ed—you know I will talk. My daddy was a great hand fer it. . . . [*Pulling out a pencil and paper and leaning over on the table.*] Cotton was bringing thirty cents to-day—got thirty fer Lilly's bale.

ED [*with a show of interest*]. Quair it run up so—boll weevil, I reckon, 's e't it all up from Texas to I don't know where.

COOPER. That's it, I 'spect. Fine on us though, fer it ain't hurt us none as yet. [*He lays down his pencil and pulls a roll of money from his pocket.* ED *sits on the opposite side of the table.*] Your bale weighed 505 pounds, the seed $20, all told $171.50. Your half comes to $85.75. [*He counts out the money and lays it on the table.*] There it is, Ed, a right smart pile. If you turn this money over to her, I reckon she'll cut a splu'ge.

ED. Thank y', Mr. Jim. I'll put it away soon's I finish my cooking. How much I owe you fer the hauling?

COOPER. Nothing, nothing. Glad to do it fer you; we'll strike off even fer that day you holp me pull stumps. [*He gets up, as if to leave.*]

ED. All right, sir. Suits me, if it does you.

COOPER [*making as if to go, but plainly in no hurry*]. You got . . . got any certain thing you want to sink this money in, Ed?

ED. Not exactly. . . . I had been thinkin'—least-ways Lilly's been thinkin'—you see 'tain't my money, it's hers.

COOPER. I know what's she's been thinking. [*He sits back down decisively.*] Look-a-here, Ed, seems like a good time fer you an' me to talk business.

ED [*uncertainly*]. Yes, sir. . . .

COOPER. I'm plumb good an' ready to sell you that land. The $400 you lent me is due about now. Course, I can pay it back. [*Edging his chair nearer.*] But I got a note over in Lillington to pay off next Sat'd'y for $500. Tell you what I'll do. Pay me $80 down now and I'll credit you with a plain five-hundred on the land.

ED [*hurrying to turn his meat*]. I dunno just exactly. . . . That's Lilly's money. . . .

COOPER. Lilly's nothing. You use' ter talk right sharp about that trade, and last spring fer a while— But you ain't 'peared to take much stock in it lately.

ED [*fingering the money*]. Well, this here's the first time cotton's been bringing anything since Lilly an' me got married. And I'd sorter been thinkin' . . .

COOPER [*filling up a clay pipe and lighting it*]. Thinking what?

ED. Oh, nothin', mebbe. I had sorter begun to git out'n the notion of the land business.

COOPER [*dropping the burning match with a smothered exclamation of pain*]. Who put you out'n the notion, Ed?

ED [*sitting down again*]. Nobody . . . that is . . . well, I just got out'n the notion, that's all.

COOPER. I know who done it. Ed, I remember, same as yesterday, the day you and Lilly drove off to git married. What had you been talking about before that,—buying you a place of yer own, that's what. You talked the same way the year after—even went so far early this fall as to lend

me the four-hundred with the land matter in mind. And now you're all changed. What's the matter?

ED. Land costs a whole sight more'n it use' ter.

COOPER. Yes, but cotton's bringin' a terrible high price and going higher. You know, Ed, I want you to have that 25 acres. Drat it, I can git rid of it to-morrow fer cash money, but—well, you've been good to wait on us all—sickness, cold, hot or whatsoever—and Mary says herself that if that piece o' ground is ever sold, she wants it sold to you two.

ED. That's shore good of her—of you too. She's tuk a sight with my Lilly.

COOPER. Well—business is business and feelin's is feelin's—but if you want that place you can—

ED. Mr. Jim, Lilly . . . she ain't—

COOPER [*stamping the floor*]. Of course it's Lilly behind it all—knowed it from the fu'st—everybody knows it! [ED *looks at the floor, then goes to his cooking. His complete silence makes* COOPER *uneasy and he speaks in a more placating tone.*] What does Lilly say, Ed?

ED. Mr. Jim, you remember that time at Tom Atkins's saw mill when I forgot myself and nearly come to—to—scrushing in his head—

COOPER. Lord, Ed, I didn't mean to rile you.

ED [*quietly*]. That's all right, I hadn't ought to git mad either. And they ain't no harm in my telling you that Lilly ain't tuck with farming no more. In place of land, she wants to buy fixin's and sich, and purty up the house.

COOPER. Wants to buy furniture, and graffyfoans, and lace curtains, and the like, uh?

ED. Somethin' like that, I reckon, if you say so.

COOPER. And all that there talk o' hern's caused you to change yer mind?

ED. The main reason, I 'spect, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER. Well, Ed, I'm goin' ter talk to you plain, man to man, and I don't want you to git stirred up nuther.

ED. What's . . . what you want to tell me?

COOPER. Well—Lilly ain't treating you right, and that's the p'int-blank truth.

ED [*going to him*]. What you mean?

COOPER. Now don't git on a high horse. I'm goin' ter say out my say.

ED [*stubbornly*]. All right, sir.

COOPER. Lilly wants to move to town, don't she?

ED. Well, she's plumb wore out with choppin' cotton and pickin' till her fingers drip blood. [*Bursting out.*] And who can blame her?

COOPER. I can, fer one. Women ain't made jest to be dolls and kept in a show-case, and Lilly Robinson ain't never hurt herself at work, now has she?

ED. I said I'd let you tell what you wanted to.

COOPER. And I will too. She's been over in Dunn now for nigh three weeks, ain't she?

ED [*controlling himself*]. She was needin' a change. It's been hard . . . hard on her since . . . since little Charlie died.

COOPER [*kindly*]. Yes, yes. [*Sternly.*] But not as big a change as she's gittin' from what I hear.

ED. Do, how?

COOPER. Oh, I know you've promised to give her that money to buy flim-flams fer herself.—Yes, you have.—And what's she doing? . . . Lloyd Mangum told me to-day that she's over there in Dunn riding around with a traveling man, some sort o' agent, one of these guys, I reckon, that squirts cologne on hisself and wears two or three rings at a time.

ED. Lloyd Mangum is a damn' liar, and I'll wring his damn' neck.

COOPER. What 'n the thunder you want to git het up so sudden fer? I ain't talkin' up fer Lloyd, or fer you, or anybody. But he's never been known to have a loose tongue, now has he?

ED [*muttering to himself*]. God a'mighty, she cain't be

doing that! [*He bows his head, staring at the floor.*]

COOPER. It's fer your own good I'm telling you this. You know well enough Lilly ought to be here helping you git out your cotton—right in the busiest time o' the year too—and she gallivantin' 'round! And Lloyd Mangum ain't the only one that's been talkin' and seein' the truth, with you as blind as a bat. Mary got a letter to-day from Marthy Sikes over in Dunn, and she spoke about Lilly's ridin' around and goin' to movin' pictur' shows with that feller. It's true, Ed, true as gospel that she ain't a-doing you right.

ED [*starting up*]. I'm going to Dunn to-night!

COOPER. Your meat's burning up, Ed. [*Going to the stove.*] And you ain't going to no Dunn to-night.

ED [*sitting down, rolling the dishcloth in his hands*]. It's a passel o' lies somebody's startin'. It shore God is!

COOPER. Lies or no lies, that's not the question. It's this. Ed—Are you goin' ter let her with her honey-sugar ways keep you from being a man? She studies herself.—Oh, yes, she does, and you needn't deny it.—If I was you I'd put on the britches and wear 'em awhile. [*He walks angrily about the table.*] Good Lord! do you reckon I'd let a bright-haired looking glass hugger run over me like that? And, Ed Robinson, if you've got any guts in you, you'll not. [*He takes up the burning meat and sets it off the stove.*]

ED. Oh, I hear what you say about my wife, Mr. Jim Cooper. And I don't want to hear any more of it.

COOPER [*shouting*]. Don't want to hear any more of it? Well, you will all right!

ED [*standing up, holding the knife in his hand*]. That I won't. Stop talking about my wife like that. [*He dashes the knife on the table, and stands closing and unclosing his enormous hands.*]

COOPER [*laughing bitterly*]. Stop talking? You order me to stop talking. Well, my boy, if I wanted to I could tell you a streak, before I finish. Why in this world you

want to go around with your eyes shut and seein' nothin', never suspicionin' what everybody has talked over and over a thousand times, I can't see!

ED [*slumping down in his chair, and sitting with bowed head*]. All right, say what you think then.

COOPER [*coming out of his flood of anger, and speaking more kindly*]. I ain't doing you right, I reckon, Ed. But I couldn't wait no longer. I just had to say what I felt fer onct. [*They are both silent a moment. Then* COOPER *goes towards the door.*] I got to be goin' now. Mebbe I done wrong talkin' to you so, and beggin' you to buy that piece of ground. [*Turning back.*] But, Ed, think of the *bargain* I'm offerin' you. Why this evening at the gin, Joe Langdon offered me $3,000 fer that piece. And . . . I tell you what I'll do—I'll let you have it fer $2,500, and five years to pay fer it. Count what you lent me and the eighty, as five hundred. [ED *sits hunched over.*] Shore 'nough, Ed, don't take on so about that little piece o' news.

ED. It ain't no little piece o' news. [*Throwing his hands out before him helplessly.*] Why, Mr. Jim, she's so . . . so . . . well, it's all lies, that's what.

COOPER. Well, poke up yer chin, and don't git down—don't you now. Everything will come out fer the best. It always does. [COOPER *stands with his hands on the door-knob. They are both silent.*] Well? . . .

ED [*turning, and pushing the money across the table*]. Here it is, Mr. Jim.

COOPER [*coming again back into the room. He sits down at the table and picks up the money. Then he takes out his pencil and writes on a piece of paper.*] Here's a receipt for the full five-hundred, Ed. Come over in the morning and we'll fix up all the papers. [ED *mechanically takes the receipt from him.*]

ED. Much obliged to you.

COOPER [*blustering*]. Keep your thanks, boy. I'm more tickled over it than you seem to be. I feel like a man who has done a bit of missionary work, or something. Say, come

on and walk home with me now and take supper at our house. Mary'll be plumb glad to have you in. Reckon she thinks old Bloody-bones's got me, or something. Come on.

ED. I cain't. I'll git my supper here . . . don't mind. [COOPER *turns around awkwardly, then moves to the door.*]

COOPER. Well, good-by. Take care o' yerself.

ED. Thank y'. . . . You do the same. [COOPER *goes out.* ED *sits staring before him. The receipt drops unnoticed to the floor. He gets up, looks ruefully at the burnt meat, and punches up the fire in the stove. He leans back against the table, his hands shoved deep into his pockets, and begins whistling "Oh, Sally dear. . . ." He sees the receipt on the floor, picks it up, crams it into his pocket, sits back heavily against the table, knocking over a vase of dried flowers. After looking intently at the vase for a moment, he takes it up and, without any show of emotion, hurls it into the corner, smashing it into bits. He punches the fire up once more, and stands warming his hands. He hesitates a moment, then suddenly hurries into the room at the left. Almost immediately he returns carrying a suit of clothes on a coat-rack and a pair of shoes. He drops them on the table, takes off his overall jacket and begins to take off his shoes. Light footsteps are heard coming up the porch. He stops, an incredulous look on his face which gives way to one of joy and anger. He watches the door in a sort of stupefaction. There is a fluttering of knuckle knocks on the door, and a voice calls, "Ed!" But* ED *makes no response. The door opens, and* LILLY ROBINSON *comes in, carrying a cheap suitcase in her hand. She is a tall young woman of twenty-three or twenty-four years, dressed in plain, becoming clothes—white waist, dark skirt and lacy collar. She has a fresh sweet face and youthful manner; yet behind her apparent gayety and childlikeness there hides a strong will and a hint of recklessness, now hidden in weariness. As she enters,* ED *begins lacing up his shoes and putting his overall jacket on again. He does not look at her after the first glance of recognition.* LILLY *stands,*

*undecided, in the doorway, waits an instant, then moves into the room, closing the door behind her.*]

LILLY. Ed, I was sorter expecting you to meet me. [ED *makes no reply, but picks up his clothes and carries them back to the room at the left.* LILLY *watches him uncertainly.*] Was you going somewheres, Ed?

ED [*reappearing*]. No, not now.

LILLY [*dropping her suitcase on the floor and standing, undecided*]. Ed. . . . I didn't mean to stay an extry week . . . but I wrote you why I wanted to. You got my letter; didn't you?

ED [*glumly*]. No, I hain't heard a word from you. [*Picking up the dishcloth and moving to the stove.*] But I've heerd *about* you.

LILLY. What, what have you heard?

ED [*dully*]. Have off yer things, and make yerself at home.

LILLY [*mechanically pulling off her coat and hat and laying them on the table*]. What'n the world ails you, Ed? You ain't mad about something, are you?

ED. I reckon I'm not.

LILLY. I wrote to you, Ed, and told you to meet me in Angier this evenin'. If it hadn't been for Mr. Jake Turlington coming this way, I don't know how I'd 'a' got home.

ED [*after a pause*]. I ain't had no letter from you.

LILLY. I give it to Mr. . . . Mr. . . . Ryalls to mail for me. [*Thinking.*] No, I declare, I plumb forgot to mail it. It's lying on the bureau at Aunt Margaret's.

ED [*a hard note slipping into his voice*]. Who is Mr. Ryalls?

LILLY. He was just a man who boarded there at Aunt Margaret's. I got acquainted with him over there.

ED [*turning to look her full in the face a moment*]. How *well* did you git acquainted?

LILLY [*in surprise*]. I . . . I don't know just what you mean.

ED. He don't happen to be a fellow you knowed last spring when you was over there, does he?

LILLY. Why, no, I never saw him before this time. And . . . he . . . he was purty nice to May Belle—

ED. And how about you?

LILLY. Well . . . why he treated me all right.

ED [*suddenly flaring out*]. By God, I reckon he did! [*And he goes on with his cooking.*]

LILLY [*startled*]. Ed, what you so upset about? You said you'd heard about me. What . . . what have you heard?

ED. I reckon you been enjoying yerself all right.

LILLY [*dubiously*]. Yes, I sure have. [*Turning quickly to him.*] What's all this you're driving at?

ED. Nothing. [*After a moment.*] Looks like you could help me git a little supper—if you ain't above it. [*She leans against the table a moment, looking at her hands. Her brow is wrinkled in thought. Suddenly she looks up at his broad back with a touch of fear in her face.*]

LILLY. Oh, what am I thinking about.—Here, you set down and let me fix for you. My goodness, you've burnt your meat slam to pieces! [*She bustles around the stove, putting in wood, cutting meat, and straightening the table, laying out dishes, etc.* ED *sticks the dishcloth towards her, sits down in a chair and begins drumming on the table.*] How you been getting along?

ED. Oh, purty good. How's Aunt Margaret and all of 'em over there?

LILLY. All right. [*Fumbling in the cupboard.*] Cain't we have some eggs? [ED *makes no reply.*] Oh, here they are. My, my, the hens must have been a-laying! Must 'a' tuk a notion and started in all of a sudden. Ain't been eating many of 'm, have you?

ED [*beginning to whistle a low meaningless tune and tapping with his fingertips on the table*]. No, not many. [*He goes on whistling.* LILLY *turns from her work now and then to glance at him. Her quickening movements*

*show her nervous perturbation. She goes on talking.*]

LILLY. Has the little white pullet we set come off yet? She was to come off sometime this week.

ED [*mechanically*]. Uh huh. [*He continues whistling and tapping.*]

LILLY [*begins breaking the eggs into a dish*]. How many eggs did she hatch? You know we put twelve under her. [ED *makes no reply, his eyes narrowing to slits and his jaw taking on a more and more firm look. His whistle is more pronounced and the tapping on the table sharper and more staccato. As* LILLY *moves around the table, she crunches a piece of the broken vase underfoot. Suddenly she stoops, finds the remains of the vase and flowers, and with an exclamation of pain and hurt, she gathers them up. She turns sharply towards* ED *with a defiant and bitter word on her lips, but his inner absorption deters her for the moment. Tears of anger glisten in her eyes. She stirs the eggs more and more rapidly. At last with a stifled sob she whirls upon him.*] Who . . . who broke my purty blue vase? [*He makes no answer. She bursts out more shrilly.*] Ed Robinson, I want to know who broke my vase.

ED [*suddenly bringing his fist down on the table in a shattering blow and roaring out his words in a rage*]. Damn it to hell, I want to know what you been doin' with that Ryalls fellow over there at Dunn?

LILLY [*laying the remnants of the vase on the table and backing away from him*]. I . . . I ain't been doing nothing. What . . . you . . . mean?

ED. Yes, you have been doing something, or else. . . . [*She looks miserably into his face, his words dying away into a mutter. They both are silent a moment.* LILLY *twists the dried flowers in her hands.*]

LILLY. What in the world's got into you? Somebody's been telling lies, that's what. Well, [*defiantly*] if you want to think *that* about your wife, go ahead and think what you please. I ain't done nothing I'm ashamed of, and that's the truth if I ever spoke it.

ED. Well, what you doing ridin' 'round with that Ryalls fellow—or whatever his name was?

LILLY. They wa'n't no harm in that. And, besides, he took May Belle around a sight more'n he did me.

ED. You went around enough to set everybody talkin' about you.

LILLY. 'Tain't the first time they've talked about me, and—[*recklessly*] it may not be the last, if you cain't treat me any better than you have to-night.

ED. What . . . you . . . mean?

LILLY. I mean that I ain't goin' to be stormed at and driv 'round like a dumb brute by a slave-drivin' husband—that's what!

ED. You needn't to r'ar so. Why'd you stay away another week, and me here with the cotton all fallin' out and nobody to pick it? Ain't no other woman in the neighborhood'd treat her man so.

LILLY. No, they ain't. They're all plumb fools! [*She turns to the stove, her lips trembling in anger, and begins putting the supper on the table.*]

ED [*presently*]. Lilly, I've tried to treat you right, but a man cain't stand everything.

LILLY [*now and then wiping the tears from her eyes*]. Come on and eat yer supper. [*She waits for him.*]

ED. I don't want nothin'.

LILLY. Ed, come on and eat. [*After a moment.*] Cain't we have a little peace? Seems lak . . . seems lak . . . [*Stifling a sob.*]

ED [*moving to the table and slouching his heavy arms down on it. He begins eating in huge mouthfuls as if he would drown his wrath with food. He lays down his knife and looks at her, sitting in her chair near the stove.*]. Ain't you goin' ter take a bite yourself?

LILLY. I ain't hongry nuther.

ED. Oh . . . well . . . [*He goes on eating. Presently he shoves his plate from him and leans his head on his hands.*] You . . . don't seem glad much to be back home.

LILLY [*cleaning the dough from her fingers with a hairpin*]. You shore don't seem glad to see me back either.

ED. Well . . . I reckon I am, too . . . but—[*He lapses into silence. Suddenly he flares out.*] I want to know what in the devil is up 'tween you and that man?

LILLY [*laughing nervously*]. Well, you won't know, 'cause they ain't nothin' betwixt us. But I can tell you this, if it'll do you any good, he knows a heap sight better how to treat a woman than you do.

ED. I reckon he does—if she's the kind of a woman he wants to treat.

LILLY. Watch out what you're sayin', Ed Robinson.

ED. I am watchin'. They ain't no woman with a grain o' sense in her head 'd be flying around with a fellow lak that, and her husband at home workin' his head off. And you orter know that.

LILLY. He took me to a pictur' show onct or twice, and give me a good time, and that's more than you've ever thought of doing the five long years I've been married to you. [*A pause.*] There you set in that there chair, laying down the gospel to me. Well, I'm goin' ter tell you a thing or two right now. You'd *kill* any woman God ever made, with your hard, stingy ways. [*She rises from her chair and stands before him.*] Oh, yes, you would. You don't care for nothin' but a mule to plow in the day time and a shuck mattress to sleep on at night—that you don't; and a-always laying up for land, always a-talking about it, and lettin' me and everything I want go with never a thought.

ED [*weakening*]. Well, Lilly, you hadn't ort to—

LILLY. Hadn't ort to what, I'd like to know. I've worked for you, washed your clothes, hoed your grassy corn, and you off fishing, stayed here at night, with you and Jeems Atkins 'possum huntin' in the swamp, and me so lonesome I jest lay there listenin' to the wind whistlin' through the trees. And I've set out your rations over this here table three hundred and sixty-five days in the year for five long winters and summers, and I ain't never heard a

dozen sweet words out'n you the whole time. God *help* me! Who wouldn't go crazy for a sight of a town and purty things onct in a while?

Ed [*mumbling*]. I cain't see why you always got to be thinkin' o' somethin' better'n you got—that I cain't.

Lilly [*swallowing her sobs*]. That you cain't. You're blind as a bat. All you study is yourself.—Look at Jim Cooper—worked his head off—after you to do the same, though the Lord knows you don't need no coaxing about saving money. Look at him. And then, look at his wife. She's nothing but a ghost of a woman. She won't cast a shadow in the sun she's so thin. He's run her to death, the dirty devil!

Ed [*with a show of anger*]. She's been a good wife to him, that's what. She ain't never had no crazy notions about gettin' fixin's, and movin' to town and dressing up in finery, and smearing herself in paint—like them hussies in Dunn. And you might ca'm yerself and not fly complete off'n the handle.

Lilly. How you know she ain't? What do you men know about a woman's wants anyway?—Nothin', not nothin'. She ain't never had the heart to go agin his wishes, poor thing. But Ed Robinson, here's one ain't goin' ter be druv' lak that. I come back home to tell you that. Leonard Ryalls showed me that they's things in this world you ain't never dreamt of. And I've made up my mind from now on to have my way about a few things, I will that!

Ed [*with a hurt in his voice*]. God a'mighty, ain't you had your way! They ain't another man in the country would let his wife go off and stay three weeks and him pickin' out her own cotton.

Lilly. How much o' yourn have I picked, I'd lak to know? Don't you say nothin' to me about work, don't you! [*She drops down in her chair and begins sobbing.*]

Ed. Now you needn't think crying'll git you anything.

[*He moves around the room, kicks at the table, seats himself again.*] Shet up yer crying, Lilly. [*She rocks in her grief. He watches her a moment.*] Shet up, I tell you! They'll hear you slam over to Mr. Jim's. [*He picks up a biscuit and begins chewing on it.* LILLY *bursts out into another tirade.*]

LILLY [*in shrill anger*]. Let them hear me! I don't care if the whole world was a-watching me. I got reason to cry, I have. [*Then she grows more calm, and speaks with more control but with more bitterness.*] I'm goin' ter say something to you now, Ed Robinson, I ain't never said to nobody before. [*She pauses a moment, swallowing hard.*]

ED. Say it if you want to—but it seems you've said enough fer one night.

LILLY [*getting up and going to the door, she opens it and stands looking out into the darkness. Quietly.*]. I can see way yonder that clump o' pines black against the sky.

ED [*uneasily*]. Come on back, Lilly, and eat a bite o' supper.

LILLY. I can see them trees there looking all thick and dark and . . . [*turning back vehemently into the room*] you know what I'm thinking of—you know well enough.

ED [*getting up quickly and closing the door, pushing her gently away*]. You quit that lookin' out thar. [*Kindly.*] Come on, gal, drink some coffee . . . or somethin'. [*He stands at the stove stirring a pan idly.*]

LILLY. I'm goin' ter tell you. [*A pause, twisting her dress in her hand.*] Who was too stingy to have a doctor? Who said they wa'n't no use putting up screens in the house? Who said all them new-fangled idees 'bout baby food and taking care was foolishness? You did, you did! And that's the reason he's out there dead and buried under them pines, with his little white dress all wet and rotten. You killed him, that's what you did, you *killed* him! [*She sits down in her chair with the tears rolling down her face.*]

ED [*in a stifled voice*]. Lilly . . . Lilly, don't—

LILLY. I jest wanted you to know that you are just as much a murderer as if you shot a man down in the road—yes, and a sight worse!

ED. I didn't . . . I didn't know . . . Lilly . . . [*He looks at her in pain.*]

LILLY. Thank God, it hurts you a little bit. [ED *sits down at the table, staring before him with set face.* LILLY *speaks very quietly.*] Now that I've told you how I feel about it maybe you won't think it so quair that I want to git away from you onct in a while.

ED [*uncomprehendingly*]. You don't mean . . . you don't believe all that, do you, Lilly? Do you feel that way about it? Shore enough? . . . [*He turns away, choking.*]

LILLY. So you did like him some yourself, didn't you? But you see it's too late now. You see, Ed, you can tap on the table and make a funny gooin' sound, and he won't answer you from over there in the corner on his pallet. [ED *looks up perplexed.*] Try it and see. He can't, you know, for he's dead . . . dead . . . dead . . . dead.

ED. What . . . what you mean? [*He stares at her blankly.*]

LILLY. You watch me now. [*She goes to the door, opens it, and calls.*] Charlie! Charlie, come here! [*Her voice goes out across the dark.* ED'S *amazement increases. She closes the door softly and turns back to him.*] You didn't hear him answer, did you, Ed? No, I could call, and call, and call, and he wouldn't make a sound. Oh, yes, I used to call when you was out in the fields workin'—oh, yes, I did. But you didn't hear me then. But you hear me now, don't you?

ED. What'n the name o' God ails you?

LILLY. You couldn't understand if I told you. [*She looks around the room.*] Ed, did you bring in my flowers off the porch at night the way I told you to? [ED *makes no reply. She goes out and brings in a pot.*] No, you didn't. Here's my purtiest geranium all frost-bitten. [*She crumples up the leaves in her hand.*] All the others

is dead . . . dead. You see how it is, Ed. You kill things you tech.

ED. Lilly, I forgot all about them flowers.

LILLY. No, you mean you didn't never think of 'em. [*She sits down wearily, thinking. They both are silent. Presently* ED *begins watching her.*]

ED. Say something. Don't set there—so still lak.

LILLY. I was jest thinkin' that . . . it'd take a long time to git any flowers growing agin lak them you killed.

ED. I told you I forgot 'em, and I didn't kill 'em. Don't lay that to me.

LILLY. It'd take too long, wouldn't it? . . . And I guess we've about come to the end of our rope, hain't we, Ed?

ED. I don't un . . . der . . . stand. What . . . you . . . mean?

LILLY. I didn't think you would. [*She sits tapping her fingers.*]

ED [*unable to endure the silence any longer*]. Le's don't keep on lak this. Mebbe I ain't done you . . . well—mebbe not just right. Mebbe nuther of us 's done tother'n jest right.

LILLY. Maybe not. That's mighty hard to do as I've found out . . . after a long time.

ED. Le's sorter forgit about all this mix-up, and go on. Things'll turn out better; they always do.

LILLY. I didn't expect to hear you say that.

ED. But, Lilly, that fellow—shore you didn't mean nothin' by goin' around with him, did you?

LILLY [*thoughtfully*]. I mought 'a meant a lot—who knows?

ED [*bitterly*]. You talk lak that an 'spect me to be humble as a dog.

LILLY. You needn't worry about him. He and May Belle was married to-day before I left. I helped 'em decorate all the week. That's what I wanted to stay over for.

ED [*a joy breaking in his voice*]. Is that so? I knowed somehow they was talkin' out'n their heads when they said

all that about you. [*Sincerely.*] I'm sorry as kin be about that vase. But I'll git you another one, that I will.

LILLY [*with gentle irony*]. There's a bed-room suite over there in Holiday's store I was looking at for seventy dollars. It's priced at a hundred; but he said I could have it for seventy, if I'd send for it in the morning. Do you think you could go for it in the morning, Ed?

ED [*quickly*]. I mought. [*Dubiously.*] But that's a heap o' money to put in on sich fixin's.

LILLY. But they ought to be enough of my cotton money to buy that. And I was wondering if you couldn't take off my cotton then and sell it.

ED. But . . . Lilly . . . I . . .

LILLY. Well, you needn't to, if you don't want to. But I was just thinking. . . .

ED [*blurting out*]. I sold it to-day.

LILLY [*still going on in her even voice*]. You did?

ED. Yes, and . . . and . . . I tell you . . . I let Mr. Jim have that money.

LILLY [*a flame in her voice for a moment*]. Oh, yes, the same way you done time and time agin—give me a cotton patch, and then by hook or crook get me to believing you needed it worse'n I did. Women don't need money lak men, do they?

ED. But I kin git it back; I know I kin. He begged it out'n me to fix up the deal about . . . about the land. I'll go over thar right now and get him to break it off. [*He stirs in search of his hat and old overcoat.*]

LILLY [*pleasantly*]. You needn't bother about it. [*Almost yawning.*] 'Tain't no use now.

ED [*again perplexed*]. Lilly, what ails you anyhow? You act quair at times.—[*Hurriedly.*] But I'll go and get it right now. [*He pulls on his coat. There is a noise of stamping feet on the porch.* ED *slips off his coat.*]

LILLY. There's somebody coming in. [*She picks up her coat and puts it on. There is a knock on the door.*]

ED. Come in. [JIM COOPER *enters.*]

COOPER. What'n the world's all this racket over here about? We heard it clean over home. [ED *stares at the floor.*] Oh, hello, Lilly. Come back, have you?

LILLY [*pulling on her hat*]. Yes, but I'm passing by. . . .

ED. Mr. Jim, I just started over to your house to see you. Lilly ain't satisfied about that trade. She wants her money back. Mebbe I ain't done jest right about it anyhow.

COOPER. I'll swear. Goin' ter let her run over you agin? Lilly, ain't you got no sense? Cain't you quit thinking about yerself long enough to help Ed git a start in the world?

LILLY. I ain't asked him to get it back. It'd be fine if Mis' Mary could ask you a question or two, wouldn't it?

COOPER [*blinking*]. None o' yer sassy talk.

ED. Mr. Jim, I'll have to back out about that trade. That was Lilly's cotton money, and if you'll give it back, I'll fix it somehow. [LILLY *picks up her suitcase and moves towards the door.*] What you mean? [*In alarm.*] Where you goin'?

LILLY [*blankly*]. I'm . . . jest . . . goin'. You all can fix up about the money to suit yourselves. I don't want none of it.

COOPER. What'n the thunder is all this foolishness about? [ED *stands with his hand on the knob of the door. The two men eye her in astonishment.*]

LILLY. I told Ed a minute ago that we had come to the end of our rope. [*Turning to* COOPER.] You know what that means, don't you? Maybe you don't, but Mis' Mary does. Ask her when you get back home. Good-by to you, Ed. . . .

ED [*amazed*]. Where you goin' this time o' night? What? . . .

LILLY. It don't matter. I'm a-goin' all right. And I ain't never coming back never . . . never . . . never. [*She pronounces the words with the same intonation as*

*"dead . . . dead . . . dead."*] Good-by agin to you all. [*She goes out, closing the door behind her—singing, as she goes.*]

COOPER [*puzzled*]. Ed, what ails her? You ain't goin' ter let her go off lak that, are you, traipsing out into the night?

ED [*blankly, dropping down into a chair*]. I dunno . . . what she means.

COOPER [*taking the money from his pocket*]. Here—here's yer money, Ed. I ain't anxious about that trade if you ain't. . . .

ED. I dunno . . . I dunno . . . exactly. . . .

[SLOW CURTAIN]

# THE EVIL KETTLE *

*A ONE-ACT PLAY*

By

LORD DUNSANY

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## CHARACTERS

Mrs. Watt
James Watt
Satan

# THE EVIL KETTLE

SCENE: *The house of* MRS. WATT.
TIME: *Tea time.*

*A room in a cottage. Window in center of back, looking out upon pleasant hills. Cupboard at right of back. Door right, near back. Table in center. Fireplace left. Couch or sofa along wall left, with head touching back. This is as I see it, but all details are unimportant except the hills, and should not fetter the initiative or fancy of a producer.* JAMES WATT, *a lad of fifteen or sixteen, is leaning with folded arms on a window sill, looking at the hills. It is what is called a "costume play," period about one hundred and fifty years ago.* MRS. WATT *is laying the table-cloth.*

MRS. WATT. Tea time.

JAMES WATT [*glancing over his shoulder and back again to window*]. Yes, mother. [*He goes on looking at the hills.*]

MRS. WATT [*going on smoothing out the table-cloth*]. Come on.

JAMES WATT. How lovely the hills are, mother.

MRS. WATT. The hills? Of course they are.

JAMES WATT. There's such a golden light on them.

MRS. WATT. Come and watch the kettle.

JAMES WATT. All right, mother; in a moment. I do so want to look at the hills. They are so lovely.

MRS. WATT. It's past five.

JAMES WATT. And the woods along the top. All the beech came out yesterday. The woods are like brass. Aren't they lovely, mother?

MRS. WATT. Of course they are. All God's work is lovely. Come and watch the kettle, dearie.

JAMES WATT. What is God's work, mother?

MRS. WATT. All the things what was intended, of course.

JAMES WATT. Didn't He make everything?

MRS. WATT. Not the ugly things. Satan makes the ugly things.

JAMES WATT. What are the things that were intended, mother?

MRS. WATT. Oh, questions, questions. What a boy it is to ask questions. I wonder if you'll be very wise when you grow up, for all the questions you've asked, or if you'll still be asking questions about everything. Deary me, I wonder.

JAMES WATT. Perhaps I'll be very wise, mother, and still not know much.

MRS. WATT. I don't see as how that could be.

JAMES WATT. But what are the things that were intended, mother?

MRS. WATT. Oh, well; wood and hills and flowers and butterflies, and the wind and the rain and the crops, and birds and young girls and all that kind of thing. Satan just makes the ugly things. Come on, now.

JAMES WATT. But look at the hills, mother, with that light on them. [*She goes to the window.*]

MRS. WATT. Yes, there they are. I remember them hills before you were born or thought of.

JAMES WATT [*meditatively*]. And they're still just the same.

MRS. WATT. Well, I wouldn't say just the same. They seem a little smaller like.

JAMES WATT. But they couldn't be smaller, mother.

MRS. WATT. Oh, I don't know. The hills are so old they might have shrunk a little.

JAMES WATT. But they couldn't do that, mother.

MRS. WATT. And they seemed to be brighter, somehow. The summers was warmer when I was young.

JAMES WATT. What would have caused that, mother?

MRS. WATT. Oh, bless the boy! How can I tell? It was a long time ago and the days just used to be brighter. Come and watch the kettle. Make the tea the moment it boils.

JAMES WATT. Very well, mother. [*She prepares teapot. He sits before the fire. She puts bread, plates, etc., on table. The kettle boils.* WATT *stretches out his hand to take it, then he draws it back. He clasps his hands round his knees and sits watching the kettle intently.*] Mother.

MRS. WATT. Well, child, what is it now?

JAMES WATT. There must be great force in a kettle, mother.

MRS. WATT. In a kettle, child? What ever do you mean?

JAMES WATT. The lid is lifting up and down.

MRS. WATT. Then it's boiling. Make the tea quick.

JAMES WATT. There must be a great force in it, mother, to lift the lid like that.

MRS. WATT. Bless the child. That's only steam.

JAMES WATT. Mother. I've been thinking that if steam can do that, it might move a rod, mightn't it? And the rod might move a wheel.

MRS. WATT. Move a wheel, child?

JAMES WATT. Yes, mother. And if we could set wheels moving, we could do the work men have to do without ever using horses.

MRS. WATT. Stands to reason you couldn't do it without horses, whatever steam could do.

JAMES WATT. Why, mother?

MRS. WATT. Why? Always asking why. Well, where does steam mostly come from? It goes up from the horses plowing when they get hot. So where would you get your steam without them horses? You'd never get enough from them little kettles.

JAMES WATT. But, mother, I'll make big kettles.

MRS. WATT. Go on and make the tea. [*He pours water*

*into the teapot.*] You'll never get a cup of tea to do the work of a horse.

JAMES WATT [*puts teapot on fire while* MRS. WATT *cuts bread, etc.*]. I'll make big kettles when I grow up. [*He gazes at the kettle again.*] Whenever the lids move, great iron bars will move with them. I'll fasten the bars to wheels, mother, and I'll make steam do everything. All the work of the world would be done in the morning, and men could walk about the beautiful hills all the rest of the day. [*Enters* SATAN *right. He crosses the room and taps* JAMES WATT *on his left shoulder. Stretching out his left arm, he beckons to the window and goes there,* JAMES WATT *following, gazing dumbly.* SATAN *is invisible to* MRS. WATT. *She cannot see him, though looking straight at him. At the window* SATAN *waves his left hand a few times upwards. Smoke as of factories rises up, covering the entire landscape. The noise and clangor are heard of the twentieth century. The smoke lifts and a factory city appears in all its devilish ugliness, with an unsightly yellow poster in the foreground, on which is written: TAKE MEDICO. THE CURE FOR ALL AILMENTS. SO NICE. The smoke thickens again and the city is covered. Again it lifts and shows the city; and so on.* SATAN *points at it. The boy stares speechless.* SATAN *slaps him on the back with cheerful encouragement.* JAMES WATT *turns and stares at* SATAN *with wide eyes and open mouth, motionless in horror at the idea that* SATAN'S *thanks were due to him for this.* SATAN *nods to him.*]

JAMES WATT [*in horror*]. Oh! [SATAN *passes his hand backwards and forwards before the window as one rubbing out a blackboard. The city and smoke disappear, the hills come back and the noise of the twentieth century ceases. When* MRS. WATT *hears* JAMES WATT *say "Oh" she looks up.*]

MRS. WATT. Why, Jimmy, what ever is the matter?

JAMES WATT. Oh, mother, he wants me to do a dreadful thing.

MRS. WATT. Why, who wants you, child?

JAMES WATT. But I won't do it, mother. I won't do it. [*To* SATAN.] I won't—I tell you I won't. [SATAN *smiles with scornful assurance.*]

MRS. WATT. You won't what, child? You won't what? What ever is it?

JAMES WATT. I won't, I won't. [JAMES WATT *flies at* SATAN *and beats him with his fists upon his bare black folded arms, not easily reaching higher.* SATAN *goes on smiling with scornful assurance.*]

MRS. WATT. Child, child, what has come over you? What ever are you doing? [*She goes towards him anxiously.* SATAN *steps back and bows gracefully to* JAMES WATT. *Exit* SATAN.]

JAMES WATT. I won't. I won't.

MRS. WATT. Jimmy, Jimmy, what ever is the matter?

JAMES WATT. He wants me to invent a bad thing, mother! He wants me to spoil our hills. He wants me to do it, mother. He wants to cover our hills with dreadful things.

MRS. WATT. Who, child? Who? What ever is come over you?

JAMES WATT. He! He!

MRS. WATT. Where?

JAMES WATT. He is gone now.

MRS. WATT. Come to bed, Jimmy. Come and lie down.

JAMES WATT. He sha'n't spoil our hills.

MRS. WATT. Come along. Come and lie down, now.

JAMES WATT. He sha'n't spoil our lovely hills.

MRS. WATT. No, no. No one will hurt the hills. That's right, lie down, now. I'll look after the hills. [*She takes his jacket off.*]

JAMES WATT. I won't invent it. I won't.

MRS. WATT. No, and you sha'n't. Now your boots. [*She takes his boots off.*]

JAMES WATT. I'll never invent it.

MRS. WATT. No, of course you won't, dearie. Now you

lie there while I get you something nice. [*He sits up.*] No, lie still, dearie. Lie still. Do as mother says.

JAMES WATT. But, mother, I want to lock the door for fear he comes again.

MRS. WATT. Lie still, Jimmy.

JAMES WATT. But, mother, I must lock the door.

MRS. WATT. I'll lock the door. No one shall come. [*She locks the door. He lies down. She goes to the cupboard. She takes out a bundle of weeds and selects three different varieties, three or four of each. She puts them together in a bunch and wrings the juice out of the stalks into a saucer. She pours the saucer into a cup and fills it with milk.* JAMES WATT *all the while is stirring restlessly. She gives him the cup to drink and pulls the blind down and sits beside his bed. There is now no light in the room but the red light of the fire, and it turns the steam from the kettle into a dull red glow.*]

JAMES WATT. You locked the door, mother? You did lock the door?

MRS. WATT. Yes, dear, the door's locked. Go to sleep. Nobody shall disturb you. [JAMES WATT *is soothed and lays his head down.*]

JAMES WATT [*quietly*]. They sha'n't take our hills.

MRS. WATT. No, no, dearie. Go to sleep now. [*He lies quiet. Reënter* SATAN *through the solid middle of the locked door.*]

JAMES WATT. Mother! Mother! He's come again. He's come again! Don't you see him? He's after our hills, mother?

MRS. WATT. No one can come, child. I've locked the door. Go to sleep. Go to sleep.

JAMES WATT. He's squatting before the fire, mother. [SATAN *has crossed the room and squatted down by the fire in front of the kettle.*]

MRS. WATT. No, no, Jimmy. Go to sleep. It's only the steam from the kettle. I'm here; no one shall hurt you. [JAMES WATT *is silent but stares at* SATAN.]

SATAN. Oh, dear kettle. Evil kettle. Beloved evil kettle. Most dear, most evil kettle. Speak to him again, dear evil kettle. [*The kettle puffs out steam into* SATAN'S *face; its lid lifts up and down.*] Yes, speak to him again. He has my work to do. Speak to him. Speak to him. We shall conquer the world, dear kettle, you and I. You are cold, poor kettle, poor evil kettle. But, see; you shall be warm as never before. [*He puts his hand into the fire just underneath the kettle. Steam rushes from its spout, the lid shakes.*] There, poor evil kettle, you are warm now. You are warm now, dear kettle. [*He pats the kettle. Steam bursts up from under the devil's hand where he touches it.*]

JAMES WATT. I won't. I won't. I won't invent it. I won't spoil our hills.

MRS. WATT. Invent what, child? Nothing can spoil our hills. Nothing can spoil them. Invent what?

JAMES WATT. Never mind what, mother. It shall never be told. I'll never do it, mother.

SATAN. Speak to him once again, beloved evil kettle. [*The kettle puffs out steam.*] Speak to him, evil kettle. [*He goes over to the window and raises a corner of the blind and calls up black factory smoke outside with his left hand. He smiles, and waves it away with his right hand with the same motion as before.*]

JAMES WATT. He wants to spoil our hills.

MRS. WATT. Go to sleep now, dearie, go to sleep. There's a good little boy. The herbs will do you a world of good if only you'll go to sleep.

JAMES WATT. But he'll spoil our hills if I don't watch him. [SATAN *approaches the bed. He stretches out his right hand. He begins to move it before* JAMES WATT'S *face as if rubbing out a slate.*] Mother! He's trying to make me forget! I won't forget! I won't forget. I'll remember. Mother! Help me, mother. Mother! Never let me go near the kettle, mother. Don't let me talk of the kettle. It's steam, mother. Steam and the devil will spoil

our hills. Oh, mother, don't let me, don't let me. Tell me never to invent anything with steam. [*He grips her arm.*] Promise me, mother! Promise.

MRS. WATT. Yes, yes, dear, I promise.

JAMES WATT. Never with steam, mother. I won't forget. They shan't spoil our hills. I— Oh, mother.

MRS. WATT. Yes, dearie.

JAMES WATT. I'm sleepy, mother. [SATAN *tiptoes out.* JAMES WATT *sleeps. For a while* MRS. WATT *sits quietly by the bed. Then she looks attentively at the boy's sleeping face and is satisfied.*]

MRS. WATT. Ah, it's those good herbs. [*She draws up the blind, revealing the cheerful hills, and goes on preparing the table for tea. She makes the tea and puts it on the table. Presently* JAMES WATT *awakes.*]

JAMES WATT. Hullo, mother. What am I doing here?

MRS. WATT. You was took over queer, Jimmy. Are you all right now?

JAMES WATT. Yes, mother, I'm all right now. What was the matter with me?

MRS. WATT. Took over queer you was. But I gave you those good herbs what I got from the hills, and they cured you, thank God. That's what He puts them on the hills for, Jimmy, among all the other flowers. They cures folk wonderful.

JAMES WATT. I'm all right now, mother.

MRS. WATT. Could you fancy a cup of tea?

JAMES WATT. Yes, mother. Proper, I could. [*He gets up and comes to the table. The kettle spouts noisily.* JAMES WATT *sits down. The kettle splutters louder.* JAMES WATT *takes up his cup of tea.*] Thank you, mother. [*The kettle makes a still noisier outburst.* WATT *looks round. He rises and goes over to look at the kettle. He sits in the chair before the fire and looks at it. The kettle steams and the lid lifts;* JAMES WATT *gazes at it.*]

MRS. WATT. Come away from that kettle, Jimmy.

JAMES WATT. The kettle can't hurt me, mother.

MRS. WATT. Come away from the kettle.

JAMES WATT. But I want to watch it, mother. I want to watch the lid lifting.

MRS. WATT. Jimmy, when you was ill, you made me promise you something.

JAMES WATT. Did I, mother? What was it?

MRS. WATT. Not to let you go near the kettle, Jimmy, nor to let you talk of steam. There didn't seem any sense in it; but there, I gave you my promise.

JAMES WATT. Did I, mother? But, mother, I've been thinking while I was watching the lid lifting. I've been thinking that, if steam can do that, it might move a rod, mightn't it? And the rod might move a wheel.

MRS. WATT. Move a wheel, child? That's what you said before.

JAMES WATT. Yes, mother. And if we could set wheels moving we could do all the work men have to do without ever—

MRS. WATT. Now come away, Jimmy, and stop thinking that nonsense. You made me promise, you know; and it didn't do you no good last time. You was took queer like. [JAMES WATT *still gazes at the kettle.*] Go and look at the hills, Jimmy, there's a good boy. There's good in the hills. [*He goes.*] That's right, Jimmy. There's enough good in the hills to keep a body right, whatever trouble of mind he had. Go now and look at the hills. When you was quite a little boy, I used to leave you where you could look at them, and I'd go and get on with my work. I knew no harm could come to you from the hills. [JAMES WATT *stops halfway, pondering.*]

JAMES WATT. Yes, mother, they're wonderful; but, mother, I can't have made you promise not to let me talk of steam. I've thought of such a great invention with steam, mother.

MRS. WATT. You made me promise and I promised you, Jimmy.

JAMES WATT. I can't have known what I was saying.

MRS. WATT. Well, anyway, keep away from the kettle, Jimmy. If I can't stop you talking, I promised you that. [*The kettle spouts away.*] I don't like the looks of the kettle neither, now I come to notice. He seems to—it seems—but that's all nonsense. But anyway, keep away from it, same as I promised you. Look at the lovely hills, Jimmy.

JAMES WATT. But, mother, I want to think. It's such a wonderful scheme I've thought of, mother. It's to make steam do all the work that men have to do. The whole day's work, mother, would be done in an hour, and every one would be free all the rest of the day.

MRS. WATT. Well, dearie, if you must have steam, get it from the plow horses when they're hot. Good honest beasts. But leave the kettle alone.

JAMES WATT. But, mother, the kind of steam I want must come from kettles.

MRS. WATT [*giving way*]. Oh, well. After all, bless the boy, what harm can he ever do with a cup of tea? [*She looks at the hills. The sun sets.* JAMES WATT *sits gazing at the kettle. The hills darken. The fire glows. And the kettle appears more evil.*]

[CURTAIN]

# COLUMBUS DAY

# THE JEWELS OF ISABELLA *

## *A BY-PLAY IN TWO SCENES*

From the Italian of
FRANCESCO FENZI,
Genoa, 1672
Translated and adapted by
A. P. SANFORD
1927

* For information regarding royalty for performance address author, care publisher.

## CHARACTERS

ISABELLA, *a queen*
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *a sailor*
D'AMORA, *a gentleman-in-waiting*
BEATRIZ, *a lady-in-waiting*
FUENTEZ, *an astronomer and cosmographer*
FELIPE, *a halberdier*
OUR LADY OF CASTILE

PLACE: *Granada.*
TIME: *Early evening of a day in April,* 1492

SCENE I: *A small room in the Alhambra.*
SCENE II: *A walled garden of the Alhambra.*

# THE JEWELS OF ISABELLA

SCENE I: *The study of* DON FUENTEZ, *a dim bare room in the palace, with narrow, beautifully carved windows letting in the sunset light to lie in glowing oblongs on the gray stone floor. On the back wall on shelves lie old tomes with brass clasps and chains—crude maps and charts—drawings of ships and galleys—a chest open with rolls of parchment—a bench—a carved chair —a heavy long table, with candlesticks, compasses, astronomical instruments. Near the center of the room a carved high-backed chair in which no one sits, with foot stool. One door at left gives into a corridor—one open casement window gives glimpse of garden with halberdier appearing and disappearing as he walks his beat.*

*At rise of curtain* FUENTEZ *and* AMORA *are bent over parchments on the table. The old cosmographer has a beard, wears a long black cassock-sort of garment and a cap. A gold chain about his neck. He is dark, lean and old, very deeply absorbed in his studies and calculations yet keen when aroused out of them.* CAPTAIN AMORA *is young, handsome, richly dressed, not so dull, and in love with* BEATRIZ, *the daughter of the old man. At the end of the table is a tray, evidently the old man's supper with bread, wine, sausage and cheese untouched —an apple near by.*

D'AMORA. So this mad Genoese is to go before the Council to-night! A round world! [*Laughs.*] Forsooth, we'd be falling off all the time— Is not that true, Don Fuentez?

FUENTEZ [*busy with his charts*]. A flat world does seem

safer, doesn't it? And we're used to it, that's the thing. Used to it—

D'AMORA. Changing the shape of the world! Dangerous, I'd say. It is fortunate the Queen has a wise man like his Eminence Mendoza to advise her. He'd put this Italian adventurer in prison—and, to the "question" did the Queen but flutter an eyelid. And a good thing too.

FUENTEZ [*looking up from his chart to regard the empty chair, deep in thought and speaking more to himself than to* AMORA]. Sometimes—the Queen— Last night sitting there, in her chair, listening while this sailor and I talked of tides and winds and storms of the western sea—and latitudes and observation of the stars—and charms and prayers to combat devils—it seemed sometimes almost as if her Highness was persuaded—[*He gets up and looks out into the sunset.*] But then the Queen was always one for proof—she delays—waiting for I know not what of testimony—[*He returns to his charts.*]

D'AMORA. Fuentez, of course *I* think it's all silly—but I believe the Queen would do it—if she had the gold—in spite of Talavera and Ferdinand and all of them. Gold! That's what is wanting!

FUENTEZ. Gold! Aye, gold— Gold is always wanting! No one has enough! The wars with the Moors have taken it all—butchering infidels for Christ—so that we may fill their heathen mosques with saints and holy relics. And do you think if there were gold Mendoza'd let any hand touch it but his own long lean fingers, with his itching palm— A most efficient treasurer, Mendoza— And so he stays his hand from Columbus' throat— Besides, it amuses the Queen, all this talk of round worlds—and it is important to keep a queen amused. She sees visions—of savage hordes kneeling to the cross. But her hands are tied. Poverty is a tight rope—we writhe and twist but can not unbind ourselves from it.

D'AMORA. Tight as Ferdinand's purse strings— Aye, there's a man! Gold does not run through his fingers save

to drip into the coffers of Aragon. I watched him yesterday at the Council—his eyes grew greedy as they talked of gold and pearls and jewels—spices and silks and all the rich things this adventurer has promised.

FUENTEZ. And souls—souls of all the dwellers in the lands he says are there [*points to the map on the wall*]—out there in the vast wastes of tides and waters— These are what the Queen cares for—

D'AMORA. You have it all so pat, this mad rigmarole—why do you not add the weight of your opinion on Columbus' side?

FUENTEZ. I do not know— A round world—that would be strange— I like not new things. In all these years since Christ and long before— It seems to me some one would have found it out. If it be as round as they say—like this apple. [*He mumbles to himself.*]

D'AMORA. What thinks the Lady Beatriz?

FUENTEZ. She believes in this Columbus—there's something about him— [*Rouses himself, becomes more direct.*] Look you, Amora— He has bewitched her with his tales and promises. Long hours they talk together here of God knows what—not altogether tides and winds and such things I fear me.

D'AMORA [*who has had his own suspicions*]. I think it would be better perhaps—if this sailor fell over the edge of his round world and came not back—to bewitch your daughter.

FUENTEZ. Amora, I am loth to tell you this, but—Beatriz will never marry you. Even if this wild adventurer did fall off the earth into the destruction that may await him on the way to India, she would wait for him all her life. She has given Columbus her heart—I know my daughter well—she has had many suitors, but none has stirred her so, not even you with all your birth and wealth. I need but to look at her when he is there—her eyes—the very blood of her body betrays her—rushing up to meet him like waters at full flood in the spring.

D'AMORA. I knew it—she has been cold to me this long time—she barely lets me kiss her, and yesterday she slapped my cheek—God's death! Is there no way to be rid of him—to send him on his quest of new worlds?

FUENTEZ. I have worked on Columbus' charts since he was here with the Queen yesterday—I almost believe it could be done. [*Takes up chart again.*] It's so plausible, after all— [*Does things with his astronomical instruments.*]

D'AMORA. Then in God's name tell the Queen so. Your opinion has great weight with her. Then we will be rid of him, once and for all. Beatriz will soon forget him. One man is as easy to love as another if his cheek be well shaven like mine, and his kisses warm and his arms enfolding her sufficiently—and if the other be absent or—dead—

FUENTEZ [*takes up the apple*]. Sailing down should be easy enough if one carried not too full a sail—but coming back—sailing uphill—no, no—the waters would rush down and bear him to destruction— I would not send a man to his certain death, Amora, even to win you for my son. Down into that treacherous sea of monsters and octopi and fearful abysses, of dread things, devils perhaps, who knows—

D'AMORA [*taking another tack*]. But you have not sailed these seas yourself, Fuentez—wise as you are, you do not know its ways and tricks as this bold sailor does— The tides of that far sea the other side of where the sun sets at night, may, with some fair wind you know not of, bear him to the Indies. And there are the souls he talks of—lost savage souls condemned to live in darkness until Columbus comes to win them to salvation for the Queen.

FUENTEZ. Souls—souls! Aye, that is what intrigues the Queen. She is a pious queen. Ferdinand, God save him, is more for the gold and brocades and spices, the chests of pearls and some say, the houris of the East. But our good queen would fill all heaven with adoring throngs of her subjects. Well—I do not know, Amora, what to do. It is

too great a thing for an old man to decide—too much hangs by it—too many lives.

D'AMORA. Beatriz wants him to go. She seeks to justify her love for this common sailor by picturing his return from this voyage rich and honored—she has dreams of grandeur.

FUENTEZ. Beatriz wants him to go. She has implored me—she would give her right hand to have him go. She says Columbus will change the history of the world by these discoveries in the western seas.

D'AMORA. She shall not give one hair of her lovely head. But he shall go. We'll find a way. [*Enter* BEATRIZ—*dressed as a lady of* ISABELLA'S *court. She is very wheedling and tender with her father. She first speaks to* AMORA.]

BEATRIZ. The Queen was asking for you. [AMORA *stops to look at her and kiss her hand.*]

D'AMORA. *Beatriz!* [*He holds her hands, looking into her eyes.*]

BEATRIZ. Amora, the Queen wants you—*now.* [D'AMORA *goes out.*] Father! [*She looks at the tray of food on the table.*] But you have not eaten! Come! You will be ill, father dear, with all this work and no food. [*She pours some wine.*]

FUENTEZ. Be still! Do not trouble me about food. [*He eats a piece of bread and drinks the wine* BEATRIZ *has poured.*] Can't you see I'm busy and troubled—what to do— Tell me, Beatriz, what is the Queen's mind to-day?

BEATRIZ. Oh, she will and she won't. Yesterday the world was round like an egg, to-day it is flat like an old woman's breast.

FUENTEZ. Never mind the breast, it is not modest. Changeable, like all women.

BEATRIZ. Better that than to have no mind to change or the will to change it—out of the ruts and superstitions of countless ages.

FUENTEZ. And Ferdinand?

BEATRIZ [*laughs*]. He's sitting on the fence, pretty! With Scylla on one side and Charybdis on the other if you know what I mean—if he jumps with Mendoza it sets the Queen against him, if he jumps with the Queen he has Mendoza to reckon with—so he sits and plays the one against the other. It drives me mad! And no one *does* anything— And the days go by—and they will take Columbus off to prison if for no reason than to have peace— It will break my heart, Father, if Columbus can not have his great desire. He has staked everything. He has not a gold piece nor another hope but Isabella.

FUENTEZ [*comforts her*]. But the Queen has no money!

BEATRIZ. It will take a deal of money and fifty men, Columbus says.

FUENTEZ. And the sailors—Columbus must pay them well for such great dangers.

BEATRIZ. Don't talk like an old woman, Father dear. There's no more danger than in any other voyage for brave men—for cowards there is always danger everywhere. But, Father, we must *do* something. If Columbus fails to convince the Council to-night they will arrest him and he will die in prison. If you love me, dearest Father, go to the Queen. Tell her you believe in him. That it's possible—only *possible* is all you need to say—that there *may* be a safe way to India into the setting sun. Tell her you dreamed it—she sets much store by dreams—that the Virgin told you— Anything— Say anything to convince her. Columbus will die if he fails—the Queen is his last hope. He *must* succeed. He *must* have his ships—[*She has the face of one seeing visions.*] and sail into the west. He can not fail; it hurts me here to think about it. He shall not fail!

FUENTEZ. You are over-brazen about this beggar sailor. It would suit your station better as Lady to the Queen to speak more softly—to be more modest—

BEATRIZ. What is modesty when a man's life and fortune are at stake and fame and honor await on a stout

heart? Love and loyalty are all that count, and faith. And I believe in him. I believe in the new world that he will find. I believe in his friendly winds and currents, his green and jeweled isles. He makes me so believe in them that I can see them all sparkling in the sun. I know they are there— His vision has created them for me out of the mysteries of the horizon. [*She pushes her father toward the door as she speaks.*] Go! As you love me, go to the Queen, before the Council meets—tell her—

FUENTEZ [*kisses* BEATRIZ]. I will tell her naught but the truth—that I have begun to believe in him, Beatriz. You have made me. Such faith as yours is from God— [*Stops in doorway.*] And, besides, you always have your way in the end. [*Exit* FUENTEZ.]

BEATRIZ [*laughs, wiping her tears*]. And I thought I was fooling him! [*She hears footsteps, runs to door. Enter* COLUMBUS. COLUMBUS *wears the dress of a ship's captain, shabby and weather beaten. He is fifty, eagle-eyed, lean and anxious-looking. Handsome in his mature manhood and wearing the charm of the adventurer. A convincing but not a dominant personality.* BEATRIZ *throws herself into his arms.*]

BEATRIZ. At last you are come! I thought I would never get my father away. [*Laughing and crying as* COLUMBUS *holds her in a close embrace.*] Oh, hold me close, my dear— something tells me our time together is short. Whether it is hope or fear—I do not know.

COLUMBUS. Beatriz! My dear little one! My lovely flower of Castile! What news have you?

BEATRIZ. Alas, none—except that my father has gone to the Queen to speak for—us. You have made him believe in you at last. He has gone to carry my faith and his to the Queen. To use that persuasion against your enemies.

COLUMBUS. Good old man! I half persuaded him you know, last night. [COLUMBUS *staggers and drops onto the bench, his head in his hands tired and dispirited.*] Enemies! There's the enmity of Mendoza, the skepticism of

Ferdinand, the superstition of the Queen—such odds to fight against. No one believes in me. I've only you, my dear. [COLUMBUS *looks hungrily at the food on the table, edging nearer it along the bench.* BEATRIZ *following with tender pats and caresses.*] They say I must win over the Council to-night or go to prison to-morrow.

BEATRIZ. Prison, yes—so my father says—they are determined on it—to shut you up away from me and from your beloved sea. But, my dear, have a stout heart—have faith—you must believe in yourself. Never doubt nor fear.

COLUMBUS. God bless you, Beatriz. I—I still believe in my star. I still pray—

BEATRIZ. And I do still believe in you. Prayer— Yes, we must pray. I am sure some way will be found— Some persuasion reach the Queen's ear to which her heart will listen. Oh, my dear, it's worse than death awaits you to-morrow if you fall into Mendoza's hands— But you shall not.—You shall not. I will beseech the Virgin to-night. [*Throws herself into* COLUMBUS' *arms.*] Oh, she must help us. She who so loved and suffered herself.

COLUMBUS. Well, it doesn't matter much, my love—I've reached almost—the end. [COLUMBUS *staggers, is faint.*]

BEATRIZ. My love—but you are ill—you faint. Tell me—have you had food to-day?

COLUMBUS. Not since yesterday. I—I had not a penny—

BEATRIZ. Here—eat—drink. [*She gives him the food, fluttering about him.* COLUMBUS *is more interested at the moment in the bread and sausage than in* BEATRIZ' *tendernesses.*]

COLUMBUS. Good sausage—and fair wine your father has—for beggars.

BEATRIZ. No, no, you shall not call yourself so— Your rags and hunger are but a test you're put to, to prove your courage and the justice of your cause. We shall laugh and forget all this when you come back to Spain rich and hon-

ored with slaves bringing gifts from the new world—from the far countries in the mists of the ever-vanishing horizon.

COLUMBUS [*eating still voraciously*]. "Ever-vanishing horizon," that's a good phrase—

BEATRIZ. Into the red and purple sunset of your royal quest.

COLUMBUS. That's good too—you have a nice imagination, my Beatriz—I must add both those phrases to my speech to-night. I'll need all the fine bits of imagery you can chisel out of that pretty head—[*Eats more bread. Drinks.*] Strange—I feel better now—my courage has come back—I believe the gold for my ships will be found.

BEATRIZ. Oh, if the Queen *had* the gold be sure we'd get it—but there isn't any—my father says so.

COLUMBUS. But the Queen has jewels—

BEATRIZ. Think—have you ever seen our Queen wear jewels?

COLUMBUS. No, not like other queens I've seen in France—but Isabella is religious—perhaps she cares not to deck herself as other women do—

BEATRIZ. Religious! that is it. That is why she has no jewels.

COLUMBUS. But surely she brought jewels from Castile when she came to be your queen—she can do what she likes with them—

BEATRIZ. No, no—she can't—

COLUMBUS. How so? Queens always have jewels to pledge, it is the tradition. Rings to give to their lovers and purses of gold—

BEATRIZ. Hush! Our queen does not have lovers and her jewels are already pledged.

COLUMBUS. How so? Tell me—. Perhaps we can get them back.

BEATRIZ. All the long years of the Moorish wars fought to bring this fair land back to Christ—destroying strong holds of barbarism like this—[*She waves her hand airily at the Alhambra.*] All those years the Queen made a prom-

ise to the Virgin, to our own Lady of Castile that her Highness brought with her and set up out there in the infidel's garden—see—just beyond the terrace—the shrine—

COLUMBUS. Yes— Well?

BEATRIZ. Isabella promised her that when once in safety flew the banners of Castile and Aragon from the towers of the Alhambra—that she would give the Virgin all her jewels, her ropes of pearls and diamonds that came to her from the old queen. She brought them when she came a bride to Ferdinand. And so on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, she hung Our Lady of Castile with all her jewels. She wears them now out there in her shrine—in the garden where no one may go but the Queen.

COLUMBUS. And you—

BEATRIZ. And me—and Amora. And the guard who's ever walking up and down.

COLUMBUS [*peering out the open casement into the garden*]. The guard! So he is. Well—that's done then—It was my last hope—

BEATRIZ. Do not despair. We'll do something—devise something— Think—think!

COLUMBUS. I've thought! I'm done! Beatriz, my dear, it is only a miracle can save us now.

BEATRIZ. A miracle! A miracle—the Queen believes in miracles. If she would pray for one to-night— If the Virgin would send a miracle! [*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER. The Council commands your attendance, Messer Columbus. [*Exit* MESSENGER. COLUMBUS *embraces* BEATRIZ *passionately and follows with firm step and head high.* BEATRIZ *sighs and turns to greet* AMORA *who has come into the passageway and stands regarding the departure of* COLUMBUS.]

D'AMORA. So your adventurer goes to meet his fate. He is over old to stand imprisonment and torture—too bad—

BEATRIZ. He is not old. And he has done better things

in his life than clank a sword and twist a mustache in a lady's ante-chamber.

D'AMORA. The Lady Beatriz is very quick on the pick-up! Here's to you! [*He drinks.*] Every man to his own desire. If he loves ships more than women they will just as soon be the death of him. *Cet egal,* as they say in Paris. And faith I can not blame him for our ships are lovely things— Saw you ever such caravels, graceful and full of beauty as lie in our harbors—you could sail safely in them to the ends of the earth—to the new lands your Columbus dreams of.

BEATRIZ. Then you do believe it could be done—

D'AMORA. If your sailor wants to sail west to find the East, let him say I—more power to him!

BEATRIZ. You do believe in this new world—you want him to go.

D'AMORA. I do. I'm persuaded— I want him to go.

BEATRIZ. How good you are! You mean to help us? Really?

D'AMORA [*puts his arm around* BEATRIZ *who does not notice*]. I would help you to get your wish—to get the ships.

BEATRIZ. How wonderful! It is like a miracle to find a friend in this last hour—when we need him so. A miracle—oh, we must think of something. [BEATRIZ *takes hold of* AMORA *suddenly, shakes him.*] Think— You! You think of something!

D'AMORA. You said a miracle, Beatriz. Had you anything in particular in mind? You generally do.

BEATRIZ. It is a miracle alone that will convince the Queen.

D'AMORA. Convince the Queen—[*Repeats dully.*]

BEATRIZ. Convince the Queen to take back her jewels from the Virgin and sell them for Columbus' ships. The Virgin must give up her jewels of her own will and desire, however.

D'AMORA. Yes, that is a miracle that would convince any one.

BEATRIZ. Amora, sometimes I think you're stupid and sometimes I think you're not.

D'AMORA. I thank you, Beatriz. So the Virgin must be persuaded to give up the jewels, is that your idea, Lady Beatriz?

BEATRIZ. Oh, if she would give them back! She would really be ransoming with them the souls of all those savage tribes.

D'AMORA. That is good logic, for a woman. That ought to do the trick. A sure sign that the Queen of Heaven wanted your lover to have his ships to go and find his new world.

BEATRIZ. The Queen will only believe some unbelievable thing. Miracles are usually such silly things, like flowers blooming on dead trees or fountains bursting forth in desert places. That wouldn't mean anything to the Queen. We must demand a practical miracle—definite. There must be no doubt about what it means.

D'AMORA. I see. The Queen is a connoisseur in miracles. It must be unique in all the world.

BEATRIZ. Do you think it could happen if we prayed all night, the Queen and I—that she would give them up? Unclasp the chain of diamonds from her neck and let them fall at her Highness' feet? Do you think that could *possibly* happen, Amora? To-night?

D'AMORA. We are taught, are we not, Beatriz, that all things are possible to faith—I shall be standing there on guard behind the Queen. Perhaps I shall see the miracle.

BEATRIZ. You can't possibly, Amora, be so stupid as you seem. [BEATRIZ *laughs. Puts her arm about* AMORA'S *neck, puts her cheek against his.*] Amora— It is a very old clasp of heavy gold, it's very firm and strong— The Virgin's gentle fingers would never be able to unclasp it—

D'AMORA. I see—I am to assist at the miracle—to so adjust the clasp—that—a breath of wind perhaps would

make the string of jewels fall—at her Highness' feet.

BEATRIZ. I see you—understand.

D'AMORA. At last—[BEATRIZ *allows* AMORA *to kiss her, valiantly enduring his caresses.*]

BEATRIZ. It is soon the hour for us to pray at the shrine. I must leave you now— Au revoir and good luck.

D'AMORA. Beatriz! [*Kisses her again. She tears herself from his arms and runs out into the corridor.*] A little devil! But a sweet wife she will make me. Tears and laughter and a merry wit!

[CURTAIN]

SCENE II: *There is an interval of a few minutes only as the scene changes to the garden of the Alhambra. There is a terrace walk to the shrine, shadowy trees and shrubs, the last pale glow of sunset dimly lighting the garden. The shrine of the Virgin is built of gray stone, the door of the shrine is heavy gilt. A silent halberdier paces to and fro and comes to salute as* AMORA *enters.*

D'AMORA. A hot night, Felipe, a sweating night.

FELIPE. Aye, Captain, a hot night and not a drop of wine to drink. They forgot my wine to-night, or mayhap guzzled it themselves!

D'AMORA. A fool for luck! I say that's too bad, Felipe —to stand guard a hot night and nothing to drink— It makes my own throat dry to think of it. [AMORA *wipes his brow of imaginary sweat.*] I say I'll stand your guard while you go and drink. [*Flings him a piece of money.*]

FELIPE. Thank you, Captain. I'll drink your health and—your lady's. [FELIPE *starts to go,* AMORA *calls him back.*]

D'AMORA. Leave me your keys, Felipe—

FELIPE. My keys, Captain?

D'AMORA. In case the Queen should come to pray while you are gone— It is almost the hour—

FELIPE. So it is— Mind the key, the lock turns just so—[FELIPE *hands him the key to the shrine and goes out.*]

D'AMORA. The devil *is* in it. It's too easy by half—[AMORA *listens to make sure* FELIPE *is out of hearing, runs to the shrine, unlocks the door, kneels a moment, crosses himself devoutly. The open door of the shrine reveals the Virgin dimly in her draperies. There are unlighted candles in gold sconces to right and left of her.* AMORA *swings himself up by the door, removes the chain of diamonds from her neck, tries to open the clasp but fails. He wrenches and twists and pries at it with his dagger but to no avail, the clasp remains firm.*] God! It would take a blacksmith to open it, nothing less— [*He tries again with all his strength to open the clasp but can not. Muttering curses the while, he flings the chain back over the Virgin's head, climbs down and locks the door of the shrine just as* FELIPE *returns with his bottle.*] Keep your jewels! [*Gives keys back to* FELIPE.]

FELIPE. Thank you, Captain— And just in time. Her Highness comes to pray. [D'AMORA *awaits their coming while* FELIPE *unlocks the shrine. Enter* ISABELLA *and* BEATRIZ. BEATRIZ *casts an inquiring look at* AMORA *who shakes his head. The* QUEEN *is dressed in graceful gray garments with a veil and circlet of gold on her head; she holds her rosary in her hand.* BEATRIZ *follows with a lighted candle.* AMORA *falls behind them as they go up to the shrine.*]

ISABELLA. A blessed thing 'twill be to have a sign—to know—to know we do God's will. Pray with me, Beatriz—ask for a sign. [D'AMORA *shakes his head again at* BEATRIZ.]

BEATRIZ. But, your Highness, may it not be that this is but a test to try your zeal—to make it hard for you. The Virgin sets us tasks like that— To see if you can have it in your heart—to refuse to send the Cross to all that multitude in the far islands that lie like jewels wait-

ing to be added to your crown. How many precious souls of those must burn in hell if you refuse to send them out the Cross—

ISABELLA. The Cross! The blessed Cross—yes, yes, the cross. We will tell the Virgin— We would fill all heaven with the rapturous devotion of their hearts, the adoration of their souls— She must be pleased— She must understand. Something tells me that she will—more faith you need, my child. Your love of Columbus makes you blind—to other things.

BEATRIZ. You know I love Columbus?

ISABELLA. I know many things— I know there are things appointed that we may not change— We can but ask and—wait. Come, light the candles, my child. [BEATRIZ *lights the candles from the one she carries. As the light increases the Virgin is revealed in her blue and white draperies, her hands crossed on her breast, the heavy chain of diamonds gleaming on her bosom, her eyes downcast resting on the suppliants who kneel in prayer.* AMORA *standing rigid behind them, his hand at his sword hilt and* FELIPE *at guard with his halberd, his lips moving in silent repetition. A bell sounds somewhere in the distance.* ISABELLA'S *and* BEATRIZ' *heads are bowed in prayer while* AMORA'S *eyes are fixed on the Virgin who seems to smile. She lifts her eyes and* AMORA *seems to see there a look of understanding. Slowly she removes her hands from her breast, lifts the chain from about her neck, lets it lie a moment in her hand while she touches a finger tip to her lip enjoining secrecy then drops the chain of jewels at the feet of the* QUEEN, *bringing her hands smartly back into place on her breast like a naughty child in fear of detection.* AMORA *falls to his knees gibbering prayers.* ISABELLA *rises with the necklace in her two hands held high like an offering to God. Then she changes swiftly from devotee to queen.*]

ISABELLA. Amora, go to the Council— Announce to them that it is my royal pleasure to come in state and make

known to them my decision in a weighty matter pertaining to the glory of God and Spain. I will speak from the Throne. [AMORA *goes out,* BEATRIZ *remains on her knees before the Virgin shrine.*]

[CURTAIN]

# SAILING WEST TO FIND THE EAST *

By

MARGARET PARSONS

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## CHARACTERS

PEDRO, *a page*
ALONZO, *a convent boy*
PRINCE JUAN, *son of* FERDINAND *and* ISABELLA
DIEGO, *son of* CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
QUEEN ISABELLA
KING FERDINAND
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
MARTIN ALONZO PINZON, *a sea captain*
TONY, VASCA, RODERIGO } *sailors*
COURTIERS, *if desired, but they are not necessary*
WINNITOBA, *an Indian boy*

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I: A room in the castle at Barcelona, August, 1492.
ACT II: On board the *Santa Maria,* October 11, 1492.
ACT III: A room in the castle at Barcelona, March, 1493.

# SAILING WEST TO FIND THE EAST

## ACT I

[*The scene is a room in the castle. There is an armchair left front. Enter* PEDRO, *showing in* ALONZO.]

PEDRO. You can wait in here, until the council is over. Sit there; they may be long in coming to a decision. [ALONZO *sits left front.* PEDRO *stands center, talking to him.*]

ALONZO. Think you they will decide to give the Genoese his ships?

PEDRO. Small chance of that! Oh, what a fool is this Christopher Columbus! [*Laughs.*] A veritable madman? He would sail west to find the East!

ALONZO. It does seem like sacrilege to even suggest such a thing. The worthy friars at our monastery have pointed out to him that one of the Psalms plainly states "as far as the East is from the West." That proves the earth is flat, so how can he ever sail around it?

PEDRO. I know not much of your learned argument that you hear at the convent of La Rabida, but the common sense I have picked up as a page in the royal court teaches me that the world is no sphere. Why, if it were, the water would spill out and the men who live on the other side would all be standing on their heads with their feet waving in the air. Everything would be topsy-turvy. The trees would grow with their branches downward and it would rain, hail and snow upward. [*Both laugh.*]

ALONZO. Oh, he is but a crazy madman, and has not a leg to stand on when it comes to an argument. Doesn't it speak in Revelation of the "four corners of the earth"?

How can a ball have a corner, let alone four corners? Would he question the very truths of the Bible?

PEDRO. But if at the convent of La Rabida they think he is so absurd, I am surprised the friar you are attending would bother to come to court with him and plead with the King and Queen, who have turned down his ridiculous appeals before.

ALONZO. But Friar Juan Perez for some reason believes in him. And you know he used to be the Queen's confessor and his opinion has great weight with her.

PEDRO. Perchance he will win his petition yet! [*Walks to right of stage and looks off.*] The Prince! [ALONZO *rises and both boys bow low as* PRINCE JUAN *enters from right. He returns their salutation with a slight bow of the head.*]

JUAN. Is the council meeting over yet, Pedro?

PEDRO. No; but they have been there a long time. It should be finished soon.

JUAN. I will wait here to see my mother. [*Sits.*] Who is this convent boy?

PEDRO. He is Alonzo, the boy with Friar Juan Perez, who has come to plead for Christopher Columbus before their Majesties.

JUAN [*laughing*]. What? The crazy Genoese who would take a fleet of royal ships over the jumping-off place?

PEDRO. The same.

JUAN. What think you of him at the convent, Alonzo?

ALONZO. Most of us consider he has lost his wits, Your Highness, though Father Juan and a few others believe in him. On all other subjects he seems sane enough. He and his son, Diego, have been staying with us for some months since his request was last refused at the Spanish Court.

JUAN. How did they happen to tarry there?

ALONZO. He arrived at the convent one night, and Diego was almost exhausted from having walked many leagues without food. So the good Friar Juan took them in.

PEDRO. Where were they bound?

ALONZO. To the French court, to try to persuade the French King to start him off on his expedition to find India in the Sea of Darkness. They had been seven years in Spain, and were discouraged.

JUAN. And well they might be. But why didn't they go on then?

ALONZO. The Friar believes in his plan and wants to keep the honor of the great discovery for Spain.

PEDRO. Honor! Yes, the great honor of making fools of themselves in the eyes of the world!

JUAN. And emptying the royal coffers in the process!

PEDRO. Your Highness has had much schooling. You must know what is beyond that blue line we see over the ocean which men call the horizon. Tell us what really lies over yonder.

JUAN. That line is the jumping-off place!

PEDRO. Yes?

ALONZO. How terrible! [*Boys come to Prince, one on each side and listen eagerly. Enter* DIEGO *at back and listens.*]

JUAN. The world is flat with four corners, and if you sail to the edge, you will go over the jumping-off place, where there are giants and goblins and dragons and monsters and all sorts of terrible things waiting to catch ships and destroy them, and to gobble up their sailors.

ALONZO. Why, if Columbus wants to take three shiploads of men to such a place to be devoured, he is worse than crazy! He is wicked!

DIEGO. You lie! You lie! There is no such place. [*He is very angry. All boys turn. He comes down stage.*]

JUAN. And who is this little spit-fire, who dares to call the Prince a liar?

DIEGO [*frightened*]. The Prince?

PEDRO. On your knees, beggar, and beg for your life!

DIEGO [*too frightened to say anything, drops on one knee and mutters*]. I—I didn't know! I didn't think—

ALONZO. Let me plead for the boy. He meant no harm,

Your Highness! He is Columbus' son, and is loyal to a fault. For years he has trudged wearily from place to place, while his father has tried to gain support for his expedition. Often they have been so poor as to be half-starving. Though the Genoese may be crazy, he is a good father, and the boy would go through anything for his sake.

JUAN [*very lordly*]. Rise, boy, and be more guarded with your tongue in the future. [DIEGO *rises.*] And now, since your knowledge of the regions beyond the jumping-off place is superior to that of the teachers of the royal children, tell us what it is like over there.

DIEGO. Only too gladly, Your Highness, will I describe it to you, as I have often heard my father do. The world is a globe, and by sailing west one comes to India and to China. You have heard of the great kingdom of Cathay, where there are wonderful cities, far more beautiful than anything ever dreamed of in Spain or Italy or France. The very bridges are of marble, and the houses are of marble, too, covered with jewels and they have roofs of gold and silver. Have you never heard of the travels of Marco Polo and all the wonders he saw in the East?

PEDRO. Aye, but we are talking of the West.

DIEGO [*earnestly*]. But I tell you the earth is a globe. [*Other boys, interested in spite of themselves, listen attentively.* DIEGO *takes a ball from his clothing.*] See, it is like this ball, which my father has often used to show how he will sail around the world and find the short route to India. Here is Spain. See what a long route overland with many hardships; while it would be simple to sail westward, and here we would be, and the gold and jewels of Cathay would be ours.

ALONZO. But if you should sail there, how would you manage to come back? Have you boats which will sail uphill? [PEDRO *goes to door, left.*]

DIEGO. We sail to Egypt and back with no difficulty.

JUAN. Come, lad, you have an answer for everything.

PEDRO [*at door*]. They come! The King and Queen, attended by Columbus and a man who might be a sailor. [*Exit left.*]

DIEGO. That is the rich sea captain, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, who is willing to help my father fit out his ships and will even go and sail one for him. [*Enter from left, or from back if there is a center back door, the Queen, with* PEDRO *holding up her train, and* COLUMBUS, *talking earnestly. They come center front. Boys bow low.*]

COLUMBUS [*as they enter*]. . . . and besides the gold and jewels it will put into Your Majesty's coffers and the glory it will bring to Spain to be the first to sail over the short route to India, think of the opportunity for spreading Christianity.

ISABELLA. Among the heathen of the far-eastern countries, you mean? [*Enter behind them* FERDINAND *and* MARTIN ALONZO PINZON. *There may be other courtiers if desired, but they are not necessary.* ISABELLA *is right front, then* COLUMBUS *to her left, then* FERDINAND *and* PINZON. PEDRO *is at left, by Queen. Other three boys are on outskirts of group right, listening.*]

COLUMBUS. Think of the wonderful chance to carry Christianity to the poor benighted heathens, and of saving thousands, perhaps millions of souls.

FERDINAND. But you say it will take at least three ships to make this foolhardy expedition? [COLUMBUS *joins other men and talks quietly with them.*]

ISABELLA [*to* PEDRO]. Go to my room, Pedro, and ask my lady-in-waiting who is there to give you my jewel box, which I left with her. [*Exit* PEDRO.]

COLUMBUS. But think how small the outlay will be in comparison with the shiploads of treasure which I shall bring you from Cathay!

FERDINAND. There is but a chance of your being right about the world being a globe and not flat. And for that chance, you would have us risk losing money, ships and men!

PINZON. *I* believe in you, Christopher Columbus. I will take this chance. I will risk the most valuable thing which any man has to offer,—my own life.

FERDINAND. Do you mean a sane and seasoned sea captain like you will go on this crazy expedition?

PINZON. Yes. [*To* COLUMBUS.] I will not only go myself, but I will be one of your captains and will help to fit out your ships. It will bring glory to Spain!

ISABELLA. We should be ashamed to do less than a private citizen offers for the glory of our country. If you, Ferdinand, are too timid to risk a little for so great a stake, I am more bold.

FERDINAND. What does Your Majesty mean?

ISABELLA. I shall finance this expedition through my own kingdom of Castile. From Castile shall come the funds, and to Castile shall go the glory. Since you, as monarch of Aragon, will have nought to do with it, let it be an undertaking of Castile alone. [*Enter* PEDRO.]

FERDINAND. But after our recent wars, do you dare to tax your people for such a purpose as this expedition?

ISABELLA [*taking the jewel box*]. The jewels of Castile shall be used to fit out the ships which shall sail into the West to find Cathay.

COLUMBUS [*kneeling on one knee at her feet, and taking her hand, over which he bends*]. Your Majesty, my hour has come at last. After eighteen years of fruitless endeavor, I know that the dream of my heart is to come true. Italy would not listen to me; Portugal stole my plans, but would not send forth my expedition; Spain alone sees the greatness of her opportunities and seizes them. To Queen Isabella and her own kingdom of Castile will come the glory of finding the short route to India over the sea, and of proving that the world is indeed a sphere!

ISABELLA [*dropping gold chain over his head*]. And you, Columbus, shall be the admiral and ruler of the lands you discover for Spain! [*As* COLUMBUS *rises,* DIEGO *comes to him and puts his hand in his father's.*]

DIEGO. Father, I am so glad!

COLUMBUS. Diego, my boy, you have shared my sorrows and disappointments. Share now in my joy.

DIEGO. I would I could go with you!

COLUMBUS. You are too young, this time, lad. Perhaps on our next expedition you will be old enough.

DIEGO. Will there be more expeditions? And will you take me as cabin boy?

COLUMBUS. When we have found our route to India there will be many expeditions.

DIEGO. I shall miss you while you are gone.

COLUMBUS [*patting his head*]. I know, boy, I know. The parting will be hard.

ISABELLA. Where will you leave him?

COLUMBUS. I do not know. The lad has no mother.

ISABELLA. Then he shall stay here and be a page to Prince Juan.

JUAN. I should like that very well; he is a brave little fellow.

COLUMBUS [*happily*]. Your Majesty does me great honor.

PINZON. 'Tis indeed an honor for one not of royal birth to become page to the Prince.

ISABELLA. But first you must go to school, Diego, and receive special training for your new position. Come, now that we have decided to send the expedition, let us have further council concerning it. [*They go off,* ISABELLA *and* COLUMBUS, *then the King and* PINZON, *all talking quietly together. Boys bow low as they go off. Then Prince sits again.*]

JUAN. What think you now of the crazy explorer?

PEDRO. Nay, he does not seem crazy any more.

ALONZO. He has a most convincing way of talking.

PEDRO. Perhaps he is right, after all.

ALONZO. You mean, that the world is really round?

DIEGO. Of course it is round. My father knows that it is round. He will prove it beyond a doubt. I only wish

I could be with him when he first sights the marble towers and gold roofs of Cathay!

JUAN. So do I! It will be a wonderful moment!

DIEGO. But I can't go this time; I am too young.

JUAN. And I am a prince! They would never risk the life of a prince on such an uncertain expedition.

PEDRO. And you, Alonzo?

ALONZO. What do you mean?

PEDRO. Is there any reason why you should not go on this trip around the world?

ALONZO. No, I am big enough and am not a prince. I might ship as cabin boy. But perhaps I'd never come back.

PEDRO. Ho-ho! So you're afraid!

ALONZO [*angrily*]. I'm not afraid. Why don't you talk about going yourself?

PEDRO. I'm not talking much. But I'm making great plans.

JUAN. You mean you would go on this perilous trip?

PEDRO. I'll take the risk for such an adventure.

JUAN. And you, Alonzo?

ALONZO. It would be quite a change from reciting Latin verbs at the convent, and yet . . .

DIEGO [*excited*]. Oh, I wish I were older! You'd see how long I would hesitate. [*Enter* PINZON.]

PINZON. Diego!

DIEGO [*going to him*]. Yes, Captain Pinzon.

PINZON. You are to go to Palos with me now. Your father will come later, but he has much to arrange before he can leave court.

PEDRO. Do you think it will be easy to find sailors to man your ships?

PINZON. That it will *not!* There are but few of us who can understand the great plans of Columbus. I'll warrant many a sailor would rather be publicly whipped than have to go on such an expedition.

ALONZO. Then where will they get the men?

PINZON. It will be difficult. Some will go out of the spirit of adventure, and some for the gold which is promised them.

PEDRO. But will that be enough?

PINZON. I fear not. They are already talking of giving prisoners their freedom if they will go.

JUAN. I suppose a jail-bird would rather run the chance of surviving the perils of this trip than stay to die by inches in his dungeon.

PEDRO. You will need some boys, won't you?

PINZON. Yes, indeed.

PEDRO. And if a boy should come to you just as you were setting sail, you might take him without asking too many questions, or demanding the consent of his parents?

PINZON [*looking sharply at* PEDRO]. Well, if he were a well set-up lad like you, he might be very useful.

ALONZO. And if he were a student whose best point was languages, perhaps they might be of use to you, when you reached India and Cathay.

PINZON. We'll need interpreters, and I take it the jail-birds won't have much learning to spare. But Don Juan Pérez was inquiring for you, Alonzo. You had best go to him. Come, Diego, there is much to do and I mustn't waste time in idle chatter. [*Starts towards door.* DIEGO *goes with him.*]

JUAN. I'll go to the gate with my new page. [*All say good-by.*]

PINZON [*with a sly wink*]. Perhaps I'll see you again—some time. [*Exeunt* PINZON, DIEGO *and* JUAN.]

ALONZO. Idle chatter! He knows as well as we do that was no mere chatter!

PEDRO. Do you really mean you will go? You are not afraid of the goblins and dragons of the jumping-off place?

ALONZO. Listen to me, Pedro. The wisest man I ever knew was Friar Juan Pérez. He says there are no goblins! He believes in the Genoese! What he believes is good enough for me!

PEDRO. But you talked quite differently when you first came here.

ALONZO. The more fool I! 'Tis a wise man whose mind is open to conviction.

PEDRO. Then we'll go. Do you think Captain Pinzon understood us?

ALONZO. Of course he did. Didn't you notice his wink?

PEDRO. A jolly wink and a jolly man!

ALONZO. I dare not leave to go to Palos now, for they would find me and drag me back to the convent.

PEDRO. And I'd have the same trouble getting away from court.

ALONZO. We'll wait until the day they sail and then run away.

PEDRO. We'll meet on the quay.

ALONZO. I'll be there. [*Sounds outside.* ALONZO *whispers*]. Hush! Here comes the Queen.

PEDRO. Perhaps she wants me to hold up her train. Such an occupation for a strong boy,—to hold a lady's satin train! Ugh! [*Goes to door right.*]

ALONZO. Before long now you'll be hauling ropes!

PEDRO [*ecstatically*]. Yes, over the bounding main, heigh-ho! [*Waves his arm.*]

VOICE [*outside*]. Alonzo! Alonzo! Come, boy! Alonzo!

ALONZO. That is the friar calling. I must go to him. [*Goes door left.*]

PEDRO. And I to my train-bearing! [*Salutes.*] Till we meet at the quay! [*Exit right.*]

ALONZO [*saluting*]. At the quay! [*Exit left.*]

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

*The scene is on the deck of the "Santa Maria" at night. As it is quite dark, it will be easy to give the suggestion*

*of a ship. Some ropes should be strung up, with perhaps a rope ladder. One or two lanterns (lighted) are hung from the rigging. There is a sail at back, diagonal. Perhaps there is a large black barrel, and some coils of rope. If a board rail can be built diagonally across back of stage, or straight across the front, this will help to give the effect of a portion of the deck, but it is not absolutely necessary. Do not depend entirely on lanterns for light; have a few dim footlights left on. Blue bulbs give the effect of moonlight. On a coil of rope at left* ALONZO *sits, telling his beads. At right,* PEDRO *lies asleep.*

ALONZO.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,
Qui victor in coelum redis
Cum Patre, et almo Spiritu,
In sempiterna saecula.

PEDRO [*raising his head and leaning on one elbow*]. Alonzo! You there?

ALONZO. Yes.

PEDRO. What are you doing?

ALONZO. Telling my beads.

PEDRO [*groaning*]. You say that as though this were your last night on earth.

ALONZO. Who can tell? [*Goes on praying.*] Gaude Virgo gloriosa,—

PEDRO. Stop that, Alonzo. I can't stand it. Talk to me. Be cheerful.

ALONZO. What is there to be cheerful about?

PEDRO. Do you really think we shall never come to land?

ALONZO. Well, we've been out more than two months, and we haven't reached Cathay yet. And when we do turn back, think of the long way we'll have to go.

PEDRO. When do you think that will be? Columbus still seems confident there is land ahead.

ALONZO. Nothing can shake his faith. He will not turn until he is forced to.

PEDRO. And who will force him?

ALONZO. The sailors. Even Captain Pinzon is losing confidence in finding Cathay.

PEDRO. That means mutiny.

ALONZO. The men have been mutinous for the past month. There has been a feeling of unrest in the air to-day. I think something is on foot.

PEDRO. For to-night?

ALONZO. Perhaps.

PEDRO. Is that why you wanted us to sleep on deck?

ALONZO. Yes.

PEDRO. But *you* want to go home, too.

ALONZO. I have given up hope, and think it footless to go further. But if the sailors should kill the Admiral, I don't think we could ever get home again. No one understands navigation as he does.

PEDRO. The sailors are scared by the variation in the magnetic needle. I don't understand why it no longer points to the North.

ALONZO. Nor I.

PEDRO. Nor does the Admiral.

ALONZO. He has some theory about it, but it's not convincing.

PEDRO. They say the goblins of the sea are bewitching the needle, so as to lead to our destruction.

ALONZO. I don't believe that.

PEDRO. Nor do I. And yet it is very strange.

ALONZO [*all alert*]. Ssh! Some one is coming. [ALONZO *slides down and hides behind rope, left front.* PEDRO *gets behind barrel, right back. Enter* VASCO *and* TONY, *creeping on cautiously. They look about to see if there is any one listening, and then whisper.*]

VASCO. Is it done?

TONY. Aye, and a safer way than running a sword through him or throwing him overboard.

VASCO. No one will know who did it.

TONY. But are you sure he will drink it?

VASCO. Yes, if you put it in his bottle of wine—

TONY. I did.

VASCO. —he always takes a glass of it about this time in the evening, before the night watch. [PEDRO *cautiously creeps off, being noticeable to the audience, but not seen by the two men.*]

TONY. He will not die suddenly, and it will seem as though from a natural disease.

VASCO. It was lucky you had it with you.

TONY. I thought it might be useful; one never knows.

VASCO. Where were you before we started on this crazy voyage?

TONY. In the Queen's dungeon, and like to have stayed there until I rotted. I used to long and long for a sight of the sky. But now it seems as though I wouldn't care if I never saw it again. Just sea and sky and then more sea and more sky, and sometimes you can hardly tell where one begins and the other leaves off.

VASCO. I know,—this is endless.

TONY. And we'd be sailing forever on it with the crazy Genoese, if it weren't for me and my little vial. [*Slaps him on back.*] Cheerio, my lad! We'll soon be headed back for land!

VASCO. Land, glory, land! [*Enter* RODERIGO.]

RODERIGO. Oh, see! See what I have found!

TONY. What is it? Bring it to the lantern.

RODERIGO. See, a branch of a tree, and it is quite green, with berries still on it. Surely there is land near!

TONY. Land! Never! We are bewitched! The goblins put these things in our way to fool us and to lead us on. That flock of birds you thought you saw to-day,—they were only wicked spirits clothed in wings.

RODERIGO. But I saw them.

VASCO. How about the cities we saw last week? Twice

they seemed to rise out of the sea, with marble towers and gleaming turrets. But did we ever reach them?

RODERIGO. No, in truth, they did vanish as we came near.

TONY. The birds were not more real than they.

VASCO. Hush! Here comes the Admiral. [*Enter* COLUMBUS.]

COLUMBUS. You are watching late. Is it the 10,000 marevedis award the Queen offered to the one who first sights land, which keeps you straining your eyes far into the night?

TONY. No. For there is no land ahead. All the land in the world lies behind us, and we sail further and further from it. What shall we do when our food is exhausted?

COLUMBUS. Sail on,—until we reach Cathay. There we shall find food in abundance, luscious fruits, which will taste good to us after our long voyage. And there will be wonderful cities, and jewels and gold. We shall all be rich. [ALONZO, *seeing no one watches, comes out from pile of ropes and joins them.*]

TONY [*to* VASCO]. So he always talks to the sailors, poor, weak-willed things. Whenever they screw up their courage to throw him overboard, he wins them back by his silver tongue. [TONY *and* VASCO *are right front. Enter* PEDRO *left front, very much excited.*] Admiral, see what I have found! [*As he hands it to Admiral, all gather round.*]

COLUMBUS. This is most remarkable. It is a carved stick.

RODERIGO. And but recently carved, I should say.

COLUMBUS [*joyously*]. That means not only land, but inhabited land.

ALONZO. But what sort of people live there?

COLUMBUS. It is strange carving; I never saw the like before.

TONY. Nor will again, I'll warrant. Goblins can do strange things.

VASCO. Do you think it was the goblins then?

TONY. Who else could it have been?

COLUMBUS [*interrupting and speaking severely*]. Enough! Enough of this foolishness! You are but children. I tell you, land is ahead, and I will add to the 10,000 marevedis offered by the Queen a velvet doublet as a prize to whoever first sights it!

TONY [*muttering*]. A safe offer!

COLUMBUS. I know there is land ahead. Be patient then but a little longer. And keep a sharp lookout. The signs all indicate that we are near the end of our voyage. I think we shall see land e'er dawn.

PEDRO. There is a strange mark on this carved stick. I beg you, look, Don Columbus. [*Draws him to lantern left front. Others talk at right.*] See how that line goes there and then down here. [*Whispering.*] You missed your wine, Admiral? Is that not a queer marking?

COLUMBUS. Very odd indeed. [*Whispering.*] Yes, the bottle had been emptied.

PEDRO [*whispering*]. I emptied it. [*Aloud.*] It must be some strange religious meaning is attached to the stick.

COLUMBUS. What mean you? Were you so thirsty you must steal your admiral's wine and then brag about it?

PEDRO. Sh! [*Loud.*] Strange carvings indeed. [*Whispering.*] Not I. I would not drink what is fit only for a noisome rat.

COLUMBUS. Ah! So that's it. Each day there is a new plot afoot. But I have a few good friends left who protect me. [*Aloud.*] A reward I will give to every man who brings me such a proof of land as this. [*Low.*] And a special reward to young Pedro, who is my good friend. [*Goes to back of stage and looks off left.* PEDRO, ALONZO *and* RODERIGO *sit on ropes.*]

VASCO [*right front to* TONY]. What think you?

TONY. That some one has fouled our purpose. His color is too healthy.

VASCO. We might throw him overboard. Stay near and

I will give the signal. When I raise my hand, come and it will be all over in a moment.

RODERIGO. Did you see the crab that was found in the seaweed by the ship this morning?

ALONZO. Surely that was a good sign. Land must be near.

PEDRO. And the birds, too! My hope is returning. As the Admiral says, all things point towards land.

ALONZO. It would seem strange for such little birds to fly overhead if land were not near. They could surely never fly as far as we have sailed.

PEDRO. Never. [TONY *and* VASCO *have gone silently back, coming up behind* COLUMBUS. TONY *raises his hand, and they start to rush towards him, when* COLUMBUS *turns suddenly, the light of victory in his eye.*]

COLUMBUS. Look! Pedro! Vasco! Roderigo! Look! What see you there? There! See! See! [TONY *and* VASCO, *forgetting their purpose and catching his excitement, look off left back.*]

VASCO. Where? Where? [*All turn and look.*]

COLUMBUS. See! Over yonder! No, Tony, further to the south!

VASCO. I see it! It's a light! A light!

COLUMBUS [*victoriously*]. Yes, a light! [PEDRO, RODERIGO *and* ALONZO *run to the others, looking off, hands over their eyes as if straining them.*]

PEDRO. A light! That means land.

COLUMBUS. It means land that is inhabited! It must be Cathay.

ALONZO. Where are the marble palaces? It is so dark I can not see them.

COLUMBUS. Patience, lad, patience! You have waited these many weeks. I have waited these many years! We must wait a few hours more. We shall take in sail and lay to, and be as patient as we can until morning.

TONY [*kneeling abjectly before* COLUMBUS]. What in-

finite wisdom is yours, O great Don Columbus! We who trusted in you did well to follow where you led.

VASCO. We shall all go home burdened with the riches of Cathay, gold and silver and jewels. We have won such prizes by our faithfulness!

COLUMBUS. The greatest prize I shall win will be the glory which I shall share with Diego. Dear little lad, who never lost confidence in me, although all the world had turned against me!

ALONZO. And we shall carry Christianity into the nethermost parts of the earth.

COLUMBUS. Gloria in Excelsis.

ALL [*taking off hats and caps*]. Gloria in Excelsis! [*All join heartily in singing it, in Latin if possible; or else they sing the Old Hundredth, with these words:*]

From all who dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise,
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
In every land by every tongue.

[*As they are singing last line, the curtain drops.*]

## ACT III

*The scene is back in a room in the castle. Center back are two thrones, made by throwing rich colored cloths over armchairs. They may have golden or bright-colored canopies above. At the right, a little front, is a smaller armchair for* PRINCE JUAN. *Left, nearer the front, are two chairs. On one of them is a cage with a parrot (either real or stuffed) in it.* DIEGO, *dresscd as a page, sits or kneels on footstool or cushion before it, talking to it.*

DIEGO. Come, my pretty, can't you say something again? Or have you forgotten all the Spanish the sailors taught

you? Must I get the Indian boy to come and speak to you. Buon giorno! Buon giorno! Now you say it. [*Enter* JUAN *from left and stands looking at him.*]

JUAN. Well, Diego, what kind of a bird have you there? Do you think it understands you? [DIEGO *rises and bows low.*]

DIEGO. Yes, and it can answer back. It is a wonderful bird from that marvelous country my father discovered where even the birds can talk. He is one of the presents my father brought me.

JUAN. You seem to have come out pretty well for presents.

DIEGO. Yes, indeed; he saved his biggest nugget of gold for me. And I have two of the gold rings the Indians wore in their noses. But see, here is some of the delicious fruit. Try some, Prince Juan. [*From bag or parcel by chair he produces a banana.*]

JUAN [*taking it and smelling it*]. What a strange looking thing! I'm not sure I like its looks.

DIEGO. Oh, but taste it; it is sweet.

JUAN [*taking bite through the skin and screwing up face*]. It may be sweet in the middle, where it is soft, but the rest is tough and horrid.

DIEGO [*taking it from him*]. Oh, no, no, Your Highness; that is not the way to eat it. I tried it that way at first, but the tough outer layer is to be thrown away,—so! [*He peels it.*]

JUAN. There seems to be considerable waste to that fruit.

DIEGO. Now, you try it—so! [*Holding peeled banana by one end, the peels hanging over his hand, he bites the other end and hands it to Prince.*]

JUAN [*hesitating*]. You're sure it is not poison?

DIEGO. Oh, it is perfectly good. The sailors say they ate them in great numbers.

JUAN. Well, I'll try it. But my father and mother

will be angry with you if it makes me sick. [*Takes bite, smiles with pleasure.*] Why, it is sweet and delicious. [*Another bite.*] I never had so tasty a fruit. [*Gobbles down the rest.*] Do they come from trees?

DIEGO. The men say they grow upside down in bunches.

JUAN. How do you mean?

DIEGO [*taking empty skin and holding it up*]. From a stalk in the middle, so.

JUAN. What a very remarkable fruit! But I am sorry there is so much waste to such a delicious thing! I'd like to eat the skin and all; perhaps I shall learn to like that later. How Alonzo and Pedro must have relished them!

DIEGO. Yes, if they were on the party. I never was real sure they went with my father.

JUAN. Don't you know yet?

DIEGO. No. I saw my father for only a few minutes before the triumphant procession began, and he had such wonderful things to tell me that I forgot to ask him. But I thought you would have found out.

JUAN. No, not yet. It would be strange after all these months when we have supposed the boys were on one of the caravels, if it should turn out that they had run off somewhere else after all.

DIEGO. But they left the day the caravels sailed. [*Enter* PEDRO *right back followed by* ALONZO.]

JUAN. Yes, I know, and it's just like that little cut-up Pedro to ship with them.

PEDRO. What's just like that cut-up Pedro, Your Highness? [*Both boys turn and look at* PEDRO *and* ALONZO *in amazement for a second. The latter are in seamen's clothes, and so bronzed as to be hardly recognizable.*]

DIEGO. Why, Pedro! [*Gives him both hands heartily.*] And Alonzo! [*Runs on to* ALONZO *and they shake both hands eagerly, as* JUAN *steps forward and takes* PEDRO'S *hands and in a moment* ALONZO'S. *They all talk at once, saying:*] Hello, Pedro! Why, Alonzo! Your Highness!

When did you come back? We're glad to be back! How have you been all this time? You didn't expect us to-day! [*Etc., etc. Make it vivacious.*]

JUAN. When did you reach Barcelona?

PEDRO. Just now. We were a few hours behind the Admiral.

ALONZO. Did you know where we had gone, when we ran away that day?

DIEGO. Well, we guessed.

JUAN. And our guesses were right.

DIEGO. You must have had a wonderful time!

PEDRO. It was wonderful in more ways than one. Poor Alonzo hasn't quite recovered from the voyage back yet.

JUAN. Sea-sick?

ALONZO. I thought I was a good sailor, but that trip back was enough to upset any one.

PEDRO. I guess I must have been too scared to be sea-sick.

DIEGO. Was it so terrible?

PEDRO. Awful! Just one storm after another! And our caravel was in bad shape. We couldn't pretend to carry sail, just tossed about night after night, and day after day under bare poles.

ALONZO. If it had been rough like that going over, we should never have got there; the sailors wouldn't have kept on.

PEDRO. As it was, they were planning mutiny most of the time.

ALONZO. I don't know which I was gladder to see,—land over there, or land on our return. We never expected to reach here alive.

PEDRO. We kept offering up prayers and promising to make pilgrimages and do special penance when we landed.

ALONZO. And the strange part of it was that nearly every time we drew lots to see which one of us should go on some special pilgrimage, the lot always fell to Don Columbus.

PEDRO. Some thought it was an act of Providence to keep him from being too proud of his great success.

DIEGO. He never expected to reach land again, either. He told me to-day that he copied off a record of the trip, put it in a barrel and threw it overboard.

PEDRO. Was *that* what was in that barrel? We thought his throwing it over was some religious observance.

DIEGO. No, it was the story of the trip, which he hoped would be washed ashore and be carried to their Majesties, if he went down with his ship.

JUAN. But I want to hear about the new country you discovered. Have the storms at sea entirely driven it out of your heads? [*He sits in his chair, which he draws down to center.*]

DIEGO. Oh, yes, do tell us all about it.

JUAN. Sit down, for we want you to make it a long tale. [ALONZO *sits right front and* PEDRO *left front.* DIEGO *gets his parrot, and sits on cushion or footstool beside the Prince.*]

PEDRO. Where shall we begin?

JUAN. When you first sighted land. That's the most exciting point. We'll hear about the trip over later.

ALONZO. Well, it was at night. Everybody was discouraged except the Admiral.

PEDRO. He alone kept his faith in his theory that the earth was round and land lay to the west. The rest of us were ready to turn back.

ALONZO. And then, one night, just as the crew were on the point of open mutiny, and it seemed as though he could not hold them steadfast to his purpose much longer, he saw a light in the distance. We were all overjoyed.

PEDRO. You see, a light meant not only land, but land that was inhabited.

ALONZO. And, of course, we thought it was Cathay.

JUAN. Did any one else see it?

PEDRO. Yes, he pointed it out to two of the sailors. But

then it vanished, and we couldn't be sure that it had really been there.

DIEGO. Did you stay up all night?

PEDRO. Well, I should think so. Not an eye was shut that night. Besides being so anxious to find land at once, there was the reward of 10,000 maravedis from the Queen for whoever caught the first sight of land.

ALONZO. Not to mention the special prize of a velvet doublet from the Admiral himself.

JUAN. And who first saw it?

PEDRO. Roderigo de Triana, who was up in the rigging. It was about two o'clock in the morning and a gun was fired to give the signal.

DIEGO [*breathless*]. And then?

PEDRO. Then we watched the day dawn over the new world. As it grew lighter we saw that the land was uncultivated and we knew it could not be the mainland of Cathay. But it was inhabited.

JUAN. Could you see the inhabitants from the ship?

ALONZO. Yes, indeed. They came running out of the woods all along the shore. They aren't like negroes, or even the people of Cathay but are more copper colored. They don't wear any clothes, and paint their bodies in gay and gorgeous colors.

DIEGO. They must have been as much surprised as you were.

PEDRO. Indeed they were. They thought we were angels coming down from heaven, and that the sails of the ships were the wings we had flown down on.

JUAN. How funny! [*All laugh.*]

ALONZO. And your father did look almost like a god, Diego, so noble was he with a scarlet cloak over his armor and bearing the royal standards. His face was lighted up with the joy of having at last discovered land and of accomplishing the purpose he had worked for so many years.

PEDRO. And the two Pinzon brothers, also gayly dressed, carried banners with the green cross, having on either side

the letters F. and I., for Ferdinand and Isabella, surmounted by crowns.

DIEGO [*ardently*]. Oh, to have been there!

JUAN. Show us how they came!

PEDRO [*jumping up*]. All right, we'll show you. You be Columbus, Alonzo, for you're more dignified, and I'll be the two Pinzon brothers. Here is my standard. [*Runs to throne and takes standard which is beside one of them.*]

JUAN [*entering into the spirit of it, gets up, takes cloth from his chair and hands it to* ALONZO, *saying:*] And here's your scarlet cloak, Don Columbus. [ALONZO *wraps himself in it.* JUAN *sits again.* ALONZO *and* PEDRO *go to back of stage and strut in. Make it rather amusing, but not ridiculous.* PEDRO *comes behind with banner.*]

ALONZO [*talking in very dignified way*]. What a marvelous land! What balmy air! How beautifully transparent is the sea! How luxurious the vegetation!

PEDRO. See, how the trees are laden with fruit!

ALONZO [*in his own voice*]. Now we are stepping out of the rowboat. [*He pretends to step down. Then drops on his knees, bends over and kisses the floor.*]

DIEGO [*to* PEDRO]. What is he doing?

PEDRO. He is kissing the land. The Admiral was so happy that he wept with joy. [*Kneels.*] We all knelt upon the land.

ALONZO [*solemnly*]. Praise be to God who has brought us safely over the wide seas to new lands! [*Rises. Draws an imaginary sword and takes standard from* PEDRO. *Speaks majestically.*] I take possession of these lands in the names of the Sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. And I call this island San Salvador for the Holy Saviour, by whose infinite mercy we have been permitted to bring this perilous voyage to a successful close! Representing the King and Queen I am admiral and viceroy of all this land and I call upon you to give me your oath of obedience!

PEDRO. And then we all swore our oath of obedience to him.

JUAN. How about the sailors who had been so treacherous to him on the way over and wanted to mutiny?

PEDRO. Oh, they swore the loudest of all.

ALONZO. Yes, they couldn't say enough to show how loyal they were to the Admiral, now that he was successful.

DIEGO. And what were the Indians doing all this time?

PEDRO. Why, they were peeking through the bushes, and when they saw we were not monsters, but friendly human beings,—who had come down from the sky, they thought,—they came out and felt of our garments and even our faces.

ALONZO. They were much amused with the beards.

JUAN. Why, don't they have beards?

PEDRO. Never. Their faces are as smooth as a girl's.

DIEGO. Father has brought over six of them, but I haven't had a chance to look at them closely yet.

JUAN. I'd like to see one and talk to him.

PEDRO. I'll get Winnitoba then.

JUAN. Who is he?

PEDRO. He's an Indian boy about our age. I'll try to find him. [*Exit* PEDRO *right.*]

ALONZO. We had great fun with him coming over,—before the storm, that is. He was terrified by the great waves and the thunder and lightning over the water. We taught him to talk a little in our language.

DIEGO. Weren't they afraid of you?

ALONZO. Not at all. Your father was so kind to them, and they admired him greatly. He never let any one hurt them, and always treated them fairly. They had never seen a sword before, and were quite amazed when they grabbed it and it cut them.

JUAN. I suppose they gave you gold.

ALONZO. Oh, yes; they had gold rings in their noses and would be delighted to swap them for trifles, a bead or a hawk's bell. [*Reënter* PEDRO *right, followed by* WINNITOBA.]

PEDRO. This is your Prince, Winnitoba. [WINNITOBA *looks at him without understanding.*]

PEDRO. Prince! Big man! Son of King! Kneel down to him. [*Doesn't understand.* PEDRO *pushes him to knee, and Prince graciously holds out his hand.*]

ALONZO. He doesn't understand. See, Winnitoba, like this. [*Kneels and kisses* JUAN'S *hand.*] Now Winnitoba do it.

WINNITOBA [*his face lighting up*]. Winnitoba know! He big God!

PEDRO. Not God, but Prince. Son of big chief.

WINNITOBA. Oh, son big chief. [*Kneels and kisses hand awkwardly.*]

ALONZO. Indians don't know how to kiss. [WINNITOBA *rises.*]

JUAN. Don't they? Why, I supposed they knew that all over the world. What do they do?

PEDRO. They rub noses. Come on, Winnitoba, show them how. [PEDRO *and* WINNITOBA, *facing each other center stage, rub noses.* JUAN *and* DIEGO *laugh in great glee.*]

JUAN. Oh, how funny! Winnitoba, I like you. I shall ask if I may have you for my special body-guard.

PEDRO. Explain that to him, Alonzo. [*To others.*] Alonzo made a special study of the Indian language and does pretty well at it.

DIEGO. I remember at the convent he always did well in languages.

ALONZO [*to* WINNITOBA]. Tilmatlu ola maxlalt teotucli. —Bo-dy guard.

WINNITOBA [*standing proudly and puffing out chest*]. Me strong man! Me body-guard to big chief's son! Me protect him always!

JUAN. That's the spirit, Winnitoba! I'm sure you will make a wonderful body-guard and I'll be the envy of all the princes of Europe. [*Enter Queen and* COLUMBUS, *followed by King left front. Other courtiers may come in procession if desired, but they are not necessary.*]

QUEEN. Here is your boy, Columbus. [*To* DIEGO, *who is bowing, along with others to King and Queen.*] He was eager for even the triumphant procession to be over, Diego, that he might come back to you.

COLUMBUS [*his arm around his boy*]. Sweeter than all the acclamations of the crowd is the joy of having the boy with me once more. [*King and Queen sit on thrones. Others stand.*]

JUAN [*sitting*]. See, mother, this is my new body-guard.

ISABELLA [*looking at Indian*]. This Indian?

JUAN. Yes, it is Winnitoba. May I have him as my own attendant?

FERDINAND. First you announce to us that he is yours, and then you ask our permission, Juan. What is there left for us to say?

ISABELLA. It is a simple request and one easily granted. And we shall baptize him a Christian.

JUAN. The first Christian Indian.

FERDINAND. Tell us, Columbus, what was the religion of the natives you found in the new part of our dominion?

ISABELLA. Sit you down there, Admiral. [*There is a gasp of astonishment, and all look at one another in amazement.*]

COLUMBUS. Shall I sit in the presence of my sovereigns?

FERDINAND. Aye, we would have you sit. All honor is due to you. So sit, while you tell us still more of your wonderful discoveries. We shall never tire of hearing about them. [COLUMBUS *sits. See that picture is well balanced.*]

COLUMBUS. Your Majesties may well show interest in the native religion of these Indians, whom we hope soon to bring by the hundreds into the fold of the Christian church— [*As he is talking, the Curtain Falls.*]

# HEALTH WEEK

# THE LITTLE VEGETABLE MEN *

## *A HEALTH PLAY FOR CHILDREN*

By

ELEANOR GLENDOWER GRIFFITH

* Reproduced from "Dramatizing Child Health," by the courtesy of the American Child Health Association, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

## CHARACTERS

Fairy Health
Cho Cho
Witch
Mr. Onion
Mr. Carrot
Mr. Beet
Mr. Bean
Vegetables
Flowers
Neighbor Apple Tree

Time: *A Moonlight Night.*

# THE LITTLE VEGETABLE MEN

## ACT I

### SCENE I

STAGE SETTING: *A garden, fence and gateway. Children (any number) dressed as vegetables—beets, onions, carrots, spinach. (Vegetables arranged in rows across stage to represent a country garden.* BEET *rises from kneeling posture at right stage, yawns—stretches.)*

BEET. How tired I am. All day long I have been sending my family to supply children with sugar.

CARROT. I give rosy cheeks.

SPINACH. Well, really! I don't like to brag, but my work is much more important than yours, for I supply iron. Every one knows how necessary iron is to a child's health.

BEAN. No one doubts your popularity, Spinach, but I am more important, for I provide growing material and all children need me.

ONION. You vegetables seem to forget your real mission. It's not who gives the most to little children, for they need each one of us. Beets, who give sugar— Carrots to make rosy cheeks— Spinach to provide iron and salts— Beans who help growth and all the other green vegetable family should work together to make children healthy and happy. [MR. BEET *advances to center stage, turns to* VEGETABLES.]

BEET. Onion is right. We will in the future work together, not apart.

SPINACH. I apologize, gentlemen. [*Bows to* VEGE-

TABLES.] My head has been turned lately by too much *popularity.* [BEET *turns to* SPINACH.]

BEET. You show a fine spirit, sir, but it grows late, my friends. Let us seek our beds. [*Walks to right stage.*]

VEGETABLES.

To bed, to bed we go,
The rain, the dew,
The moonlight, too,
Help us to grow.

[VEGETABLES *stir—move—settle to sleep. Enter—* WITCH (IGNORANCE) *crosses to center of stage.*]

WITCH. Ha! Ha! The Vegetables asleep. I can safely steal one—which shall it be? The Onion looks young and tender, 'twill do to season my soup. How angry the Health Fairy will be, and that Cho Cho. [*Leans over and lays a hand on the* ONION. *The* ONION *awakens, rubs his eyes, sits up.* WITCH *puts finger to her lip.*]

WITCH. Don't make a noise. Come with me. I have a present for you. [*Takes* ONION'S *hand, draws him to center stage.*]

ONION. Who are you?

WITCH [*smiling and patting his arm*]. I'm a lonely old lady who has a house full of beautiful toys, and no little child to play with them. There are engines and boats and dolls and balls. I want you to come and see them all.

ONION [*eagerly*]. I would like to come, but I am needed here. You see, we vegetables are growing night and day so that children everywhere can have green vegetables to eat.

WITCH. But you are only one vegetable, the children can do without you.

ONION. No, no, Cho Cho told us that every vegetable, even the smallest one, was needed to feed the little children.

WITCH. I will delay no longer. You shall come. [*Roughly grabs* ONION, *drags him across stage.*]

ONION. Help! Help! my comrades. [*The garden awakes—wild confusion among* VEGETABLES, *running about*

*stage.* BEET, BEAN, CARROT *and others lay hands on the* WITCH *and try to stop her.* WITCH *beats them off with heavy stick. Exit, dragging* ONION *with her.* BEET, BEAN, CARROT *and others walk to center of stage.*]

BEAN [*wiping his eyes*]. Poor, poor Onion, what will become of him?

CARROT. And children need onions to eat.

BEET. Children need us all; without vegetables no child can be healthy.

OTHER VEGETABLES. Can't we do something, Mr. Beet?

BEET. Nothing, nothing, this Witch is so clever and travels with such great speed that no one could overtake her.

CARROT. Alas, our poor comrade!

BEAN. If we only had some friend to lend us help—some one to advise us.

BEET. There comes old Neighbor Apple Tree, let's ask his help.

VEGETABLES. Yes, yes, let's ask Neighbor Apple Tree. [*Enter Old Man dressed like Apple Tree, lower limbs and body in dull brown, head-dress of green leaves, arms green, with hanging apples attached.*]

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE [*looks surprised*]. What's wrong, my friends? All honest folk should be a-bed at this hour; 'tis near the stroke of twelve.

BEET [*comes forward, lays hand on* NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE'S *shoulder*]. Neighbor Apple Tree, a great calamity has befallen us, and we know not which way to turn.

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE. Calamity, you say? Who would hurt the peaceful green vegetables?

BEET. Yes, calamity so great that we are crushed and broken. An hour ago, while we slept, the wicked Witch Ignorance crept softly in among us and carried from our midst one of my men. She is strong and cruel and beat us to the earth with a great stick. Our Comrade cried to us for help, but we were powerless, and before our very eyes the Witch dragged him away. [VEGETABLES *show distress.*]

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE. I saw a Witch as I was coming

hither. Even as I approached, she was mounting her broomstick and tied behind I saw a dark object. It must have been your friend.

BEET. What shall we do, Neighbor? Is there no way to overtake this cruel Witch?

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE. You cannot travel fast enough. She will make for her home in Dark Hollow Cave, and on her flying broomstick is far on the way there now. But courage, my neighbors, I will tell you what to do. Go to your rest, sleep well, and, when morning comes, start forth to the home of Fairy Health. Tell her your trouble and she will help you. Her friend, Cho Cho, is a match for the Witch. If Fairy Health and Cho Cho are on your side the Witch is helpless to harm you.

BEET. Thank you, Neighbor Apple Tree; will you spend the night among us?

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE. No, no. I must away to the Great City, the children there need apples.

Apples young and apples old,
Apples hot and apples cold,
Apples tender and apples tough,
Thanks be to goodness
We have apples enough.

[*Exit* NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE.]

BEET. Back to bed, vegetables; in the morning we will seek the Fairy. [VEGETABLES *settle to sleep. All is quiet in the garden.* WITCH *enters softly—drops a letter beside the* BEET. *Exit without waking* VEGETABLES.]

[CURTAIN]

## SCENE II

*The same garden. Morning.*

VEGETABLES *awake slowly.* BEET *rises, glances beside him, finds the letter. Reads, wrings his hands.*

BEAN. What new trouble has come upon us?

BEET. The Witch again. Hear this: [*Reads letter from* WITCH.]

*Hark ye, Green Vegetables.*

Cease to help the Fairy Health, or ye shall rue it. From my home in No Knowledge Valley I have watched night and day, and naught has escaped me. Ye shall not persuade children to eat green vegetables, for they grow too strong and healthy. I would have them thin and pale. I hate your Fairy, with her beautiful face. My face is ugly. Each day more children leave me and hasten to build her house of health. Your comrade lies bound upon the stone floor of my cave and unless ye obey me I will return each night, and from your midst steal one of the vegetable men.

From,

WITCH IGNORANCE.

[VEGETABLES *depict grief, distress; gather around* BEET.]

BEET. Come, Bean and Carrot, bear me company, I go to the Fairy. If report speaks true, she is wise and good and will help us in our trouble. Keep the garden gate tightly locked, my vegetable children, until I return.

VEGETABLES. We will, we will. [Exit BEET, BEAN, CARROT, VEGETABLES *waving good-by, and carefully locking gate.*]

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

### SCENE I

STAGE SETTING: *A lovely garden, children dressed as flowers. A rustic seat in center of stage.* FAIRY HEALTH *seated. Garden gate at right of stage. Enter* CHO CHO *through gate.* FAIRY *rises to greet him.*

FAIRY. Welcome, Cho Cho; come rest a while, then tell me of my many children in the great city. Are they

healthy and happy? [*Takes* CHO CHO'S *hand and leads him to the rustic seat.*]

CHO CHO. I grieve to tell you, Fairy, but I fear there is trouble brewing for your children.

FAIRY [*clasping her hands*]. What is wrong? Surely they have not stopped drinking milk.

CHO CHO. No, not that.

FAIRY. They have not forgotten to clean their teeth or take their baths?

CHO CHO. No, not that.

FAIRY. Nothing could keep my children from eating green vegetables. What is it, Cho Cho?

CHO CHO. Last night as I sat beside my Magic Window I saw the old Witch Ignorance steal down the street. She paused at every door where children lived and made upon it an ugly mark.

FAIRY. Oh, Cho Cho, that means trouble for the children.

CHO CHO. Yes, Fairy, it means trouble, but what kind of trouble? If only we knew. [*Enter* BEET, CARROT *and* BEAN *through gate.* BEET *bows before the* FAIRY.]

BEET. Fairy Health, we come to you from the green vegetables and earnestly ask help, for we are in great trouble. [FAIRY *and* CHO CHO *rise.* FAIRY *walks forward.*]

FAIRY. What is your trouble, little men?

BEET. A wicked Witch, called Ignorance, came while we slept and carried off one of our comrades and, more than that, Fairy, she threatens to come each night and steal one of our men. Help us, Good Fairy, for she is very powerful.

FAIRY [*laying her hands upon his shoulder*]. Courage, Vegetables. Cho Cho and I will help you.

CHO CHO. This is what the black mark meant upon the doors. I will away, Fairy, to my friend the wonderful dog. He can travel like the wind. We will find this Witch and punish her for the harm she has done the vegetable men. [*Exit* CHO CHO.]

FAIRY. Rest here, little men. I will tell you what Cho Cho does.

BEAN. But you will not be able to see him, Fairy, after he goes any distance.

FAIRY. Oh, yes, I will, for I have magic sight and can see many miles from here. [*Walks to gate, leans forward, shading eyes with hand.*] Cho Cho has reached the dog's house. The dog comes out. Cho Cho is telling him. Cho Cho is on his back. The dog bounds out upon the road. He travels like the wind—his lovely tail waves like a plume—hold on, Cho Cho, you will surely fall. They are speeding so fast I can scarcely see. How the people rush out to see them!

BEET. Do you see the Witch, Fairy?

FAIRY. No, no, not yet. The dog enters a forest and is going slowly. [*Passes her hand over her eyes and leans eagerly forward.*] Now, I see a great cave—Cho Cho dismounts—he is hiding in the bushes.

CARROT. What next, Fairy; do you see our comrade?

FAIRY. Not yet, but I see the Witch. She is coming out—Cho Cho is flashing a crystal ball in her eyes—she falls down—she falls down. [FAIRY *claps her hands.*] Now Cho Cho brings out your comrade. They mount the dog's back and are coming home. Your friend is saved. [FAIRY *takes the little men by their hands and they dance together around the stage. Enter* CHO CHO *and* ONION *man.*]

CHO CHO. I bring your comrade, little men; no harm shall befall you, for the Witch is blind and helpless.

FAIRY. And my children can eat green vegetables. [*Claps her hands.*] They would not be strong without vegetables. I do so thank you, dear Cho Cho.

BEET. We all thank you.

ONION [*to* CHO CHO]. I, most of all, do thank you, for I have been in the Witch's house. Before you came I lay on the cold stone floor, bound hand and foot. On the fire a great pot of coffee spluttered and spilled over, making a most unpleasant odor as it burned. There was no fresh air

in the dark cave and the floor was filled with dirt and litter. I had lost all hope, when from without I heard Cho Cho's clear voice—then our friend Publicity's happy bark. [ONION *puts handkerchief to eyes.*] I can say no more, Vegetables, I am overcome by my memories. [VEGETABLES *crowd around him—shake his hand—pat back—show affection. Enter* NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE.]

NEIGHBOR APPLE TREE [*to* VEGETABLES]. I told you the Good Fairy would help you.

BEET. You did, indeed.

CHO CHO. Come, let us dance here in this lovely garden to show our happiness. [*Bows low before the* FAIRY.] Will you dance with me, good Fairy Health? [FAIRY *takes his hand. Music.* FLOWERS *and* VEGETABLES, *led by* FAIRY *and* CHO CHO, *dance.*]

[CURTAIN]

# THE HOUSE THE CHILDREN BUILT *

By

ELEANOR GLENDOWER GRIFFITH

* Reproduced from "Dramatizing Child Health," by the courtesy of the American Child Health Association, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

## CHARACTERS

Fairy Health
Cho Cho
First Child
Second Child
Third Child
Group of Children
First School Child
Second School Child
Witch
First Boy
Second Boy

# THE HOUSE THE CHILDREN BUILT

*The Fairy Garden—Green Bush at left of stage*—FAIRY *lying beside bush.*

FAIRY. My house, my beautiful house is gone. What shall I do?

VOICE [*from bush, calling*]. Fairy, little Fairy! [FAIRY *rises to her knees, looks everywhere for voice.*]

FAIRY. Whose voice is that?

VOICE. I am called Education, and by some the Lovely Bird. What is your trouble? Why do you weep?

FAIRY. I had a beautiful house, lovely beyond words. A wicked Witch hath burned it to the earth. Its windows were of stained glass and the sunlight stealing in filled my house with wondrous color. Its bricks were firm and strong and dark green, glossy ivy hung from the shingled roof. In one short hour it burned. Look there beyond that lattice and see the blackened ruins of my house. [*Points to left of stage. Rises to feet.*]

VOICE. Keep up your courage, little Fairy, and I will tell you how to build anew your house. [FAIRY *dries her eyes.*]

FAIRY. How can that possibly be done?

VOICE. It can be done by the hands of little children alone. Every time a child learns to eat the right food, a brick shall be added to your house; every time a child learns to sleep in the sweet, fresh air, a shingle shall be put upon the roof, and every time a child learns to play and be happy, a colored glass shall be added to the windows.

FAIRY. But, alas! How shall we teach the children these things?

VOICE. I will go to the teachers, who are wise and good, and tell them what to do. Farewell, little Health Fairy. [*Noise in bush.*]

FAIRY. He has gone. Can it be true that little children will give me back my house? [FAIRY *flits among the flowers, trains a vine, pulls a rose, humming softly. Exit left. Enter right,* BOY, *school age, dressed in old clothes, brimless hat, bare feet, stumbles, falls flat on stage, rises to sitting posture, rubs toe.*]

BOY. Lordy! But that toe hurts me [*examines foot carefully*] and I have skinned it, too. It's mighty good I didn't have on my Sunday shoes or they would be skinned 'stead of my foot. I can grow more skin, but shoe leather costs a lot of spensive money these days. [*Rises, limps across stage.*] Guess I'll rest myself on this here bench. [*Takes out mouth organ, plays jig. Enter* SECOND BOY, *left stage; pauses.* SECOND BOY *also ragged.*]

SECOND BOY. Some playing! Sounds like a yellow dog having a fit. [FIRST BOY *sits up angrily.*]

FIRST BOY. Bet you can't beat it.

SECOND BOY. I could beat that in my sleep. [FIRST BOY *walks over, offers mouth organ.*]

FIRST BOY. Well, then, lemme hear you play "The Star-spangled Banner." That's a pretty piece.

SECOND BOY. I ain't playing to-day, I got a fever blister. [*Refuses mouth organ.*]

FIRST BOY [*scornfully*]. You ain't got gumption enough to play nothing. I seen people like you before. They know so much that their head won't hold it all. [SECOND BOY *shakes his fist, pushing* FIRST BOY.]

FIRST BOY. Who you pushing? For two pins I'd knock you into next week, but you ain't my size.

SECOND BOY. Quit it. [*Takes marbles from pocket,—large agate.* FIRST BOY *draws near eagerly.*]

FIRST BOY. Lordy, but they are beauts. [BOYS *draw ring, start game.*]

SECOND BOY. What you doing out of school to-day? I hooked it.

FIRST BOY. I didn't hook it. My ma sent me to borrow an extra cup from her sister, 'cause the preacher is coming to supper. I got lost and come to this place. Who lives here, anyhow? [*Enter* FAIRY HEALTH. BOYS *start back staring.* FAIRY *advances, smiling.*]

FAIRY. How do you like my garden, boys?

FIRST BOY. Scuse me, miss, but who are you? I never did see anybody look like you. [*Walks around* FAIRY, *admiring dress, touches wings.*]

FAIRY. I am the Health Fairy and this is Fairyland, but you boys ought to be in school. Why are you here?

SECOND BOY. I hooked it, lady. My teacher's awful nice, but I got so tired hearing about how many bones was mixed up inside of me when we had our physiology lesson this morning that I didn't go back after dinner.

FAIRY. I can understand your not caring about the bones, but it's not playing fair to hook it. You see, the state pays for every day at school, and when you stay away the state pays twice and the old Witch Ignorance gains a day.

SECOND BOY. Who gains a day?

FAIRY. There is a wicked witch called Ignorance who goes about the world doing harm to every child who listens to her. She whispered in your ear to-day, although you saw her not, "Don't go to school!" In her home is an immense gray rock, with sides as smooth as the blackboard in your school. On this she keeps her score. Under the names of children whom she claims as hers she had to-day written yours. [SECOND BOY *comes forward angrily.*]

SECOND BOY. I like her nerve, writing my name on her blackboard; but you bet, Fairy, she won't get another chance. Bones or no bones, I stay in school to-morrow. [FAIRY *lays hand on his shoulder.*]

FAIRY. That's the right spirit. [*Turns to* FIRST BOY.]

And why are you out of school, my boy; did you hook it, too?

FIRST BOY. No, miss, my ma sent me to borrow another cup, 'cause we ain't got but three cups, and the new preacher is coming to supper.

FAIRY. And did you get the cup?

FIRST BOY. Yes, miss, here it is. [*Puts hand in coat pocket, draws out cup, broken in two pieces. Amazed. Frightened.*] I broke it, when I fell down. [*Looks at broken cup.*] My ma will beat me for this. I'm afraid to go home.

FAIRY. Put the broken cup behind that green bush. [*Points to left stage.* BOY *obeys.*] Come stand beside me here. [FAIRY *raises her hand and waves it three times toward the bush.*]

FAIRY. China cup, broken in two— Be mended now, just like new. [*To* FIRST BOY.] Go get your cup. [BOY *walks to bush, emerges with unbroken cup in hand, to center of stage.*]

FAIRY [*smiling*]. Take your cup home, child, and try to have your mother send you on errands out of school hours or Witch Ignorance will write your name on her gray stone blackboard.

FIRST BOY. I sure will, miss, and I'm going home on a straight beeline before I break this cup again. [*Exit* FIRST BOY. SECOND BOY *follows him to gate, pauses.*]

SECOND BOY. Good-by, Fairy, I'll get even with that witch yet. [*Exit left. Enter* CHO CHO *through gate, at right, quite excited.*]

CHO CHO. The highroad is filled with children all hurrying here. What does it mean, Fairy?

FAIRY. They are coming to build my house.

CHO CHO. Build your house? Congratulations, dear Fairy, but words fail me. Nothing but a little monkey business can express my pleasure. [*Dances, turns handsprings and cuts up generally.* FAIRY *looks on, smiling. Enter through gateway, children carrying school-books, hats or*

*sunbonnets, lunch baskets—singing song or lullaby. Pause before* FAIRY.]

FIRST CHILD. I am drinking a quart of milk each day. May I help to rebuild your house, good Fairy Health?

FAIRY. You may, indeed. Pass beyond the lattice yonder. [CHILD *curtsies. Exit left stage.*]

SECOND CHILD. I eat green vegetables. May I help, too? [FAIRY *smiles assent, points to left of stage. Exit* SECOND CHILD, *waving hand to* FAIRY.]

THIRD CHILD [*advancing*]. I eat a lovely bowl of oatmeal for my breakfast every morning. Dear Fairy, let me add a brick unto your house.

FAIRY. With pleasure, little one; go forward to the lattice. [*Points to lattice at left. Exit* THIRD CHILD, *skipping. Group of children follow* THIRD CHILD, *singing and waving hands and books to* FAIRY *and* CHO CHO.]

FAIRY. Let us follow the children, Cho Cho.

CHO CHO. Lead the way, sweet Fairy. [*Offers hand to* FAIRY. *Exit, left, talking earnestly. Enter a Witch from gateway at right. Steals across stage, looks behind lattice.*]

WITCH. Alack-a-day, that Fairy Health hath stolen the children from me. Once they ate buns and drank black coffee. Now they eat oatmeal, drink milk, and even cocoa. Soon all the children in our land will be round and rosy. I must stop this Fairy house before it has too firm a foundation. [*Walks back and forth across stage, wrings hands, pauses in thought.*] I have it. As the children pass this way, I will speak to them. [*Draws box of candy from her cloak.*] This candy will persuade them to follow me. Once in my far distant home, the Fairy will be powerless to help them. [*Enter* SECOND CHILD, *through gateway at right.*]

WITCH. Good morning, pretty dear, where are you going?

CHILD. I am going to build the Fairy's house. Is this the right way? [WITCH *draws near, smiling.*]

WITCH. Don't do that, my child. [*Lays hand on* CHILD'S *shoulder.*] Come with me, I will give you coffee to

drink and sweet buns. My house is more beautiful than the Fairy's and see this delicious candy. Come with me. [CHILD *hesitates. Takes* WITCH'S *hand. Exit right,* WITCH *and* CHILD. *Reënter* WITCH.]

WITCH. I have gained one child. She is now in charge of my Coal Black Imp, and will soon be far from this Fairy's help. [*Enter another child, hands full of flowers.*]

CHILD. Can you tell me how to find the Fairy Health? I picked these flowers for her on my way to school.

WITCH. What do you want with her, my dear?

CHILD. I am helping to build her house. You know a wicked witch burned it to the ground. [WITCH *draws near, smiling.*]

WITCH. Come with me to my house. It's much more beautiful than the Fairy's, and you need never eat horrid food, like oatmeal or green vegetables. See this candy? It's quite delicious; do have some. [*Holds box to* CHILD. CHILD *draws back.*]

CHILD. No, no; the Fairy does not want us to eat candy between meals.

WITCH. Why mind that Fairy? She does not love you; come with me. [CHILD *frightened, draws back.* WITCH *roughly grabs her arm.*] You shall come with me, ugly brat. [CHILD *struggles, screams.* BOYS *enter, right.*]

BOTH BOYS. The Witch! [*Surprised. Rush to* WITCH, *grab her arms.* WITCH *drops* CHILD, *struggles.* BOYS *hold her.*]

SECOND BOY. So you put my name on your blackboard! I said I'd pay you for it. [*Shakes* WITCH. *Enter* CHO CHO *and* FAIRY, *left.* FAIRY *moves swiftly toward* WITCH. *Waves her hand above* WITCH'S *head, gazing steadily into* WITCH'S *eyes.* WITCH, *frightened, stunned. Staggers through gate. Exit right.* FAIRY *raises* CHILD. *Comforts her. Dries eyes.*]

FAIRY. Follow that Witch, Cho Cho, and see if there is any other child in her wicked power. [*Exit* CHO CHO, *right.*] Come see my home, dear child, you shall add a

brick to its walls. [*Takes* CHILD'S *hand. Exit* FAIRY *and* CHILD, *left.*]

FIRST BOY. Come on, let's go see this Fairy house. [*Exit* BOYS, *left. Enter* CHO CHO *at right with lost* CHILD. CHILD'S *clothes torn, hair disarranged, crying.*]

CHO CHO. Do not cry, little one, you are safe in the Fairy's garden. The old Witch Ignorance cannot harm you here. [*Enter* FAIRY, *left through lattice. Sees* CHILD.]

FAIRY. My dear, my dear, what happened to you? [*Puts arms around* CHILD.]

CHO CHO. The Witch had persuaded her to leave your garden, Fairy, and the Coal Black Imp had dragged the Child through tangled underbrush.

FAIRY. I hope you punished them.

CHO CHO. That I did. The Imp's long tail I tied to the Witch's back hair, and left them struggling to be free. [*Laughs.*] They were indeed a funny sight.

FAIRY. I cannot pity them, the Witch is so cruel to my children, but let's forget her, and dance among my flowers to show our happiness. [CHO CHO *bows before* FAIRY, *takes her hand. Enter other children and boys from left.* FAIRY *and* CHO CHO *lead march of dance. Boys dance together, cut capers.*]

[CURTAIN]

# CLEAN UP!*

## *ONE HEALTHY ACT WITH MUSIC*

By

FLOYD KYMES RUSSELL

* Received first prize 1925 playwriting contest for high schools conducted by the National Tuberculosis Association, and used by permission of that association.

## CHARACTERS

JIM, *owner of the lunch room*

MICKEY
SPUDS
ABEY
TONY
SAM
RED
} *newsboys*

OLIVE OSCEPTIC, *from Massachusetts*
MIMI, *Salvation Army lassie*
OLD DUTCH CLEANSER
GOLD DUST TWINS
CHORUS OF SERVING MAIDS AND CAFÉ CUSTOMERS

SCENE: JIM'S *lunch room.*
TIME: *The present.*

# CLEAN UP!

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Opening chorus .....Newsboys
2. "Swat that Fly" .....Newsboys
3. "Clean Up" .....Jim and Serving Maids
4. Specialty .....Dutch Cleanser and Gold Dust Twins
5. "Whisperings of Love" .....Jim and Mimi
6. Finale .....Entire Company

*The scene is the interior of a dirty, disorderly lunch room, commonly termed a "chili parlor." A door center shows on the opposite side of the street the entrance and signs to a neat, attractive restaurant, "The Hygeia Café." The setting shows down stage the back of a lunch counter. On top of the counter are dirty dishes, cracked glasses, a battered old coffee urn, uncovered pies, doughnuts, etc. A tin dishpan and dirty dishcloths are hung on the back of the counter in plain view of the audience. In front of the counter, so that patrons will face the audience, are six or seven stools. At the right of the lunch counter is a table with two chairs available for customers. An entrance left leads from the kitchen. A torn calendar and a cheap picture may disgrace the walls. The whole scene is one of filth, clearly denoting an unhealthy atmosphere.*

*At rise of curtain,* JIM *is discovered in a dirty butcher's apron in one of the chairs right, tilted back with feet on table, smoking pipe and reading the "Police Gazette." After introduction to opening chorus, six newsboys enter center, come down stage to footlights and sing with appropriate action.*

## OPENING CHORUS

(*For music see "Swat that Fly,"* p. 241)

Down the streets and avenues,
At passers-by, we yell.
Extra! Extra! here's the news.
We shout so we can sell.
You say we ought to be in school,
And maybe you are right.
But we ain't found in the Golden Rule
How to stop our appetite.

[*Go to counter and sit on stools.*]

CHORUS:

Come on, gang, let's grab a bite.
Jimmy might sling grub all right.
Coffee hot and a stack of cakes.
The best he makes we'll see.
Here's a gang that knows the stuff.
We are tough, but we ain't so rough.
Lobster salad, oysters, chicken,
Some folks may call fancy pickin'.
Plain old grub is good enough for me.

[JIM—*business of filling orders.*]

RED. Jim, dis makes de thud mornin' yev giv me de busted cup.

MICKEY. Naw, Red, dat's a new bust. I got de old one.

SAM. Sy, Jim, when dya wash dese here last?

SPUD. Yeah, dat's what I say. Dis saucer's so sticky I can't get me cup loose.

JIM. You fellows shut up and suck the mud. I'll have your hot cakes in two flips. [*Exits left.*]

ABEY. Phwat you guys dink of dis here new joint across the street?

TONY. Some class to that layout.

RED. Everything snow white.

SPUD. When I look in dat window over there everything is so white and clean I feel pale.

MICKEY. How come? Scared somebody'll clean you?

SPUD. If you think you can clean me, step on over.

TONY. Aw, souse your trap, Spud, he don't want to fight. He means soap suds.

SPUD. What's dat?

TONY. What's what?

SPUD. Soap suds.

TONY. Search me. Here's de stacks. [JIM *enters left with cakes.*] Slide me the cow salve. [*Somebody throws the butter at him.*]

SAM. Here's one that's burned, Jim.

JIM. Well, shut up about it or I'll charge you for extra heat.

RED [*sawing on a cake*]. Jim, sure you didn't get your nightshirt mixed up in dis dough?

MICKEY. Nix, boy, Jim don't wear no nightshirt.

ABEY. Phwats de use of having two shirts anyway?

TONY. Who runs dat healthy looking dump across de way, Jim?

JIM. Haven't learned his name yet, boys, but he's sure knockin' a chunk off my trade.

ABEY. Maybe you'll have to cook up some flossy name to hang out in front.

SAM. Yea, like the Hiji Café.

SPUD. Dat ain't it. It's Hyga Café.

RED. Dat's what's wrong, Jim. You need a new name.

ABEY. Dat ain't all. You need some new batter. Dis cake tastes like one I left in here last week.

MICKEY. Dis one's so tough I can't chew de syrup.

SPUD. I got three flies in my lassus already.

JIM. Well, you oughtn't to kick at havin' meat for breakfast.

SPUD. But the wing and legs tickle when I try to swallow.

RED. Dip 'em in dat coffee, boy, and dey'll git soft.

SAM. Dere wouldn't be room in mine. It's floatin' full already.

ABEY. What dya say, gang, we try de clean joint tomorry? It don't cost no more.

TONY. I'm on.

SPUD. So am I.

SAM. Suits me. I've been havin' cramps every mornin' since I left Sambo's Sandwich Shop.

JIM. What do you fellows want for a dime?

ABEY. Well, we don't want busted crockery with its cracks full of other guys' grease.

RED. And I'm tired of coffee that floats a spoon. Honest to goodness, Jim, when didja scrub dat pot last?

JIM. You guys make me sick with your up-stage stuff. Lemme one of those papers to swat some flies.

MICKEY. We'll swat 'em.

SPUD. Come on, gang, let's mash these flies and then beat it. [*Music—swatting to introduction, steps during chorus with swatting action.*]

## "SWAT THAT FLY"

Every year when winter goes
  And spring is near at hand,
When the freckles find your nose
  And say "ain't nature grand?"
Here they come a million flies—
  To multiply each day,
So join our company if you are wise
  For here is what we say:

CHORUS:

Come on, gang, let's swat that fly,
  Swat that fly, swat that fly,
Here's one, there's one, hit him hard,
  On your guard, home run.

Hear them buzzing round your head,
Knock 'em dead was what I said,
Swat 'em, sock 'em, mash 'em, knock 'em,
Human dynamos we'll shock 'em.
Nasty little nuisance is the fly.

[NEWSBOYS *all exit.*]

JIM. There goes some more business to that white-washed shack across the street. I wish Mimi would drop around. We've got to do something quick or quit business. Hello, look who's here. What'll it be to-day, sir? [OLIVE *has entered. He is very neatly dressed, fastidious and monocled. Wipes stool with clean white handkerchief. Examines everything critically.* JIM *scratches himself in two or three places.*]

OLIVE. You don't by any chance, sir, have the itch?

JIM. Nothin' like that. It's wool underwear. What'll you have? [*Hands* OLIVE *a soiled menu card, who, instead of taking it, delicately takes* JIM'S *hand between two fingers, turns it over and examines it.*]

OLIVE. My, my, what a beastly hand for a man who deals in food. Those nails. That dirt, my, my!

JIM. Well, nobody's askin' you to lick me paw, nor eat out of it. What'll ye have for breakfast?

OLIVE. Let me think. Mercy, what an unhealthy, soiled place you have here. Do you have prepared any antiseptic sandwiches? The kind wrapped in oil paper, you know.

JIM. Naw, we don't have nothin' like that. How about hot cakes?

OLIVE. Dear me, no. Have you no sterilized cakes or sanitary packages of food of any kind?

JIM. There's seven kinds of pie. We'll fix you hamburgers or hot cakes, eggs either wrecked or baptized, and the best coffee in town.

OLIVE. No, no, my intestinal tract is very sensitive to microbes and unsterilized foods. I think you may serve

me with something whose edible portion is yet pure and untainted. I think I would like a cocoanut and a hard boiled egg.

JIM. I'm the only hard boiled egg around this joint and I'll bounce this mitt off your cocoanut if you don't drag your sweet smelling anatomy out of this place. Beat it.

OLIVE. My word, what a temper. Ah! There is the Hygeia. That is the place I was looking for. [*Exit. As he exits a Salvation Army lassie passes him. As she enters, he drops a coin in her tambourine.* MIMI *comes forward to the table and sits.*]

JIM. Mimi, little gal, that guy sure made me mad with his big city stuff.

MIMI. Jim, dear, you should control your temper before customers no matter how strange their manners are.

JIM. But that fellow didn't have any manners. He was just a plain nut.

MIMI. Probably he thought the same about you. And maybe you lost a good customer.

JIM. He isn't the first customer I've lost. That swell café with the high sounding name across the street has been pulling in some of my regular feeders all morning.

MIMI. It isn't such a swell place, Jim. It is no larger or better than yours. Only they have it very clean and attractively fixed up to please their patrons.

JIM. By the way, Mimi gal, I wish you'd think up some highbrow name I could tack on the front of this dump. Maybe I could get some of my trade back again.

MIMI. You foolish fellow! The name hasn't anything to do with it. Half the folks can't pronounce it and the other half don't know what it means.

JIM. Well, why do they go there?

MIMI. Because it is clean, wholesome and healthy looking. People nowadays are thinking more about their health and are demanding better food, the right combinations of food. They are insisting on cleanliness, neat service, clean

cooks, sanitary dishes and counters, cheerful surroundings. Jim, you called your place a dump. If that's what you call it, then that is what it is. And everybody then will consider it a dump. People don't eat their meals in dumps.

JIM. But my trade always has eaten here.

MIMI. Yes, I know, Jim dear, but the man across the street has seen your mistakes and is profiting by them. He is giving his trade more than you have to offer.

JIM. Then why shouldn't I beat him at his own game and win them all back again?

MIMI. Now you are talking sense.

JIM. Will you help me?

MIMI. Sure I'll help you in every way I can. Your success is my success.

JIM. Where shall we begin?

MIMI. The first thing, I should say, would be a general clean-up. Scour that coffee urn, put netting over all that food, scrub the floor, counter and stools, wear pure white linen, throw away those cracked dishes, have some attractive pictures and make the whole place as near like home as you can. Oh, there's lots to do.

JIM. I'll say there is. [*Gets bucket and mop.*] You go find some curtains and pictures for me, Mimi, and I'll get busy right away.

MIMI. That's the right spirit, Jim. And I'll have some friends of mine who are serving maids down the street come up for a while and help us. Be right back. [*Exit.*]

JIM. Good Lord, but she's got me all pepped up. I feel like I'm going to take a rise in the world. [*Sings. Six serving maids enter at chorus and join in the cleaning and singing with appropriate steps.*]

## "LET'S CLEAN UP"

When you run a business that the public doesn't choose,
Blame nobody but yourself or else you surely lose.

Try to learn the reason why your friends pass by your door
Then you find a remedy to draw them back once more.
Maybe you forgot—and overlooked a lot,
Cleaner places, happy faces, what they're looking for.

CHORUS:

Let's clean up! you shine the cups and saucers.
Let's clean up! you scrub the floor and counters.
Scare away the dirt and let some health and sunshine in.
Polish all the silverware and scour the glass and tin.
Let's clean up! and wash that dirty linen.
Let's clean up! and wear a clean white apron.
You won't know this place when we get through with it to-day,
We will make it healthy for we know that health will pay.

[*At the close of the chorus the curtain is lowered for a few minutes to denote the passing of several hours. Music continues during the interim, at which time* OLD DUTCH CLEANSER *and the* GOLD DUST TWINS *do a specialty.*]

SPECIALTY

O. D. C. I peek in all the corners,
G. D. T. We poke in all the cracks,
I chase old dirt away so far
We won't let him come back.
I scour and scrape and clean up,
Our work is much the same,
ALL { And we will clean your house for you
If you can guess our name.

CHORUS (Trio)

For we're the friend of every housewife,
And we're the pal of every cook,
Yes, we're the ones they always send for
To find the dirt in any nook.
For we can make your things look shiny,
Where we go it's always clean,
So your health will better be
If you'll always send for me,
We're the Gold Dust Twins and Old Dutch Cleanser,
You know what we mean.

(Second Verse)

ALL—Our home is where the sun shines,
We hate a place that's dark,
We play around with ivory flakes,
With Fairy soap we lark.
Sapolio is our cousin,
Palm Olive is our aunt,
And Lysol is our step mamma;
A healthy crowd you'll grant.

[*Exit and curtain rises. At rise of curtain a complete change in setting is noticeable. Curtains at the windows, new pictures, food protected, all fixtures and furnishings clean and white (possibly the counter and table covered with white oil cloth). Coffee urn clean, dishes rearranged, etc., etc.* JIM *in snow white linen.* MIMI *and* JIM *discovered sitting on a table right, singing.*]

## WHISPERINGS OF LOVE

JIM.

For me, Mimi, you are the only girl ever taught me to try.

I'm true to you because I want to be, all that pleases your eye.

MIMI.

I hear, my dear, and what you say to me,

I will try to keep you liking me.

JIM. Say some day that you will marry me.

MIMI. Who?

JIM. Me.

MIMI. You?

JIM. Of course.

MIMI. Why?

CHORUS [*both*]. I love you dearly. My fond heart is nearly filled to overflowing with a love that you are knowing, dear. Please won't you call me names that will enthrall me? How I long to end this song with Whisperings of Love. [*After duet,* MIMI *rises, goes to entrance center and stands with her tambourine.* JIM *working behind counter, whistling, arranging pies, etc., and giving a last shine to a few glasses.* OLIVE *enters, tips hat to* MIMI, *drops coin in her tambourine, comes forward and sits at table right, without hesitating.*]

OLIVE. Do you know, sir, that I discovered across the way that the Hygeia is a misnomer.

JIM. How is that, sir? [*Hands him an attractive menu card.*]

OLIVE. It was my impression that the name was a lure. It is a most unwholesome, unsanitary place. It was a peculiar sensation that I had. Everything was white and seemed clean enough on the surface, but I sensed a presence of dirt. Camouflage I think you would call it. [*Looking about*

*him.*] If I may dare to comment, you have made drastic changes here in your place of business.

JIM. Yes, sir, thank you, sir, we hope to have our customers feel at home; that is, we want 'em to know that here their health is protected.

OLIVE. A very good policy indeed. [*Voices and laughter outside.*]

MIMI [*running down stage*]. Oh, Jim, here comes a whole party down the street. Do you suppose they have heard of your clean up and are coming here?

JIM. I hope so, Mimi, we're sure ready to take care of them and I bet they will find this the healthiest café in town.

MIMI. And cleanliness is contagious. [*Looks out door.*] Yes, here they come, Jim; your idea was a success. [*Comes to him.*]

JIM. No, Mimi, it was your idea.

MIMI. Well, suppose we say our idea, Jim. [*Enter six couples, nicely dressed, as if from a party. Girls are seated on the stools with boys at their sides. At chorus of finale, all come down stage behind counter with* OLIVE, MIMI *and* JIM *in front for curtain.*]

JIM and MIMI.

## FINALE

Now we know success is ours,
For everything is clean—
Let the public come and see
A place they've never seen.
Where your health will be as safe
As in any home in town.
And here you'll find that
We treat you all right
As your orders we take down.

REFRAIN:

Come on, folks, let's eat a bite,
Jimmy's right, he's clean all right.
Here your food is cooked O. K. and
Served the way we say.
Here's a crowd that likes to meet
Where it's neat and here we eat.
We don't have so many wishes
But we like to have clean dishes.
Health is what we're thinking of to-day.

[*Enter* GOLD DUST TWINS *and* OLD DUTCH CLEANSER.]

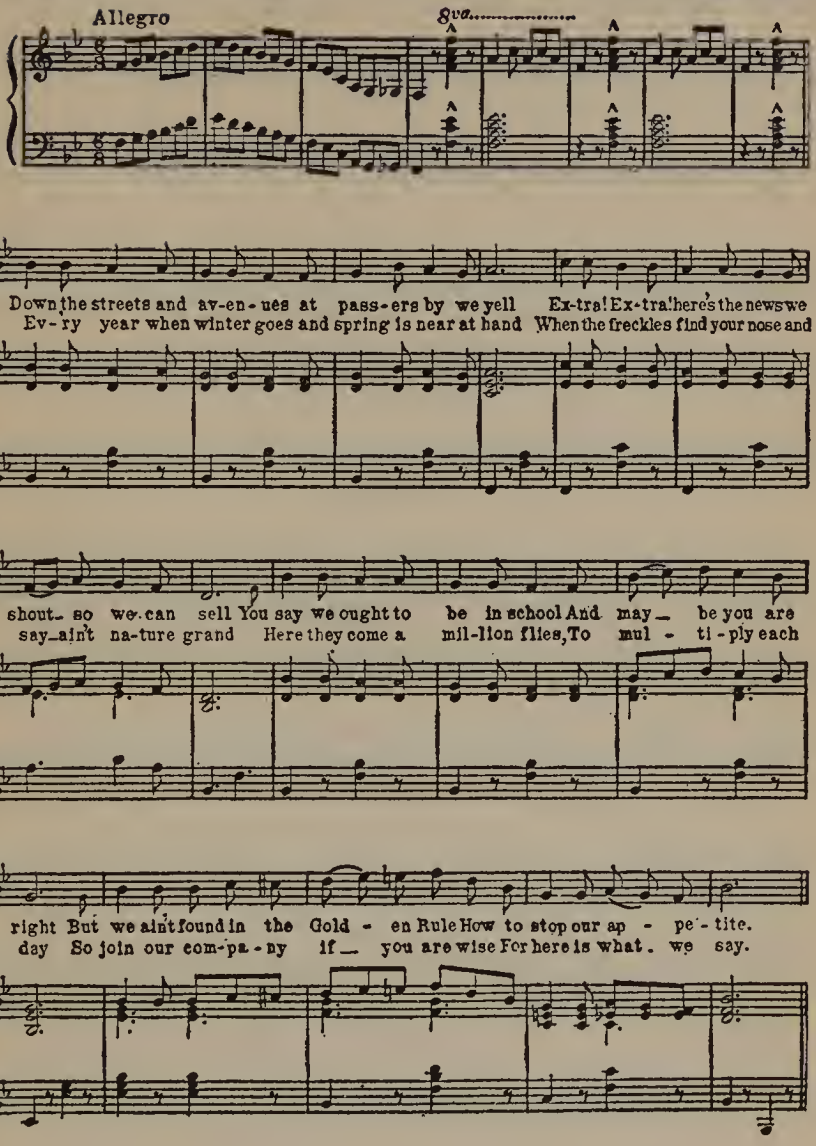
CHORUS:

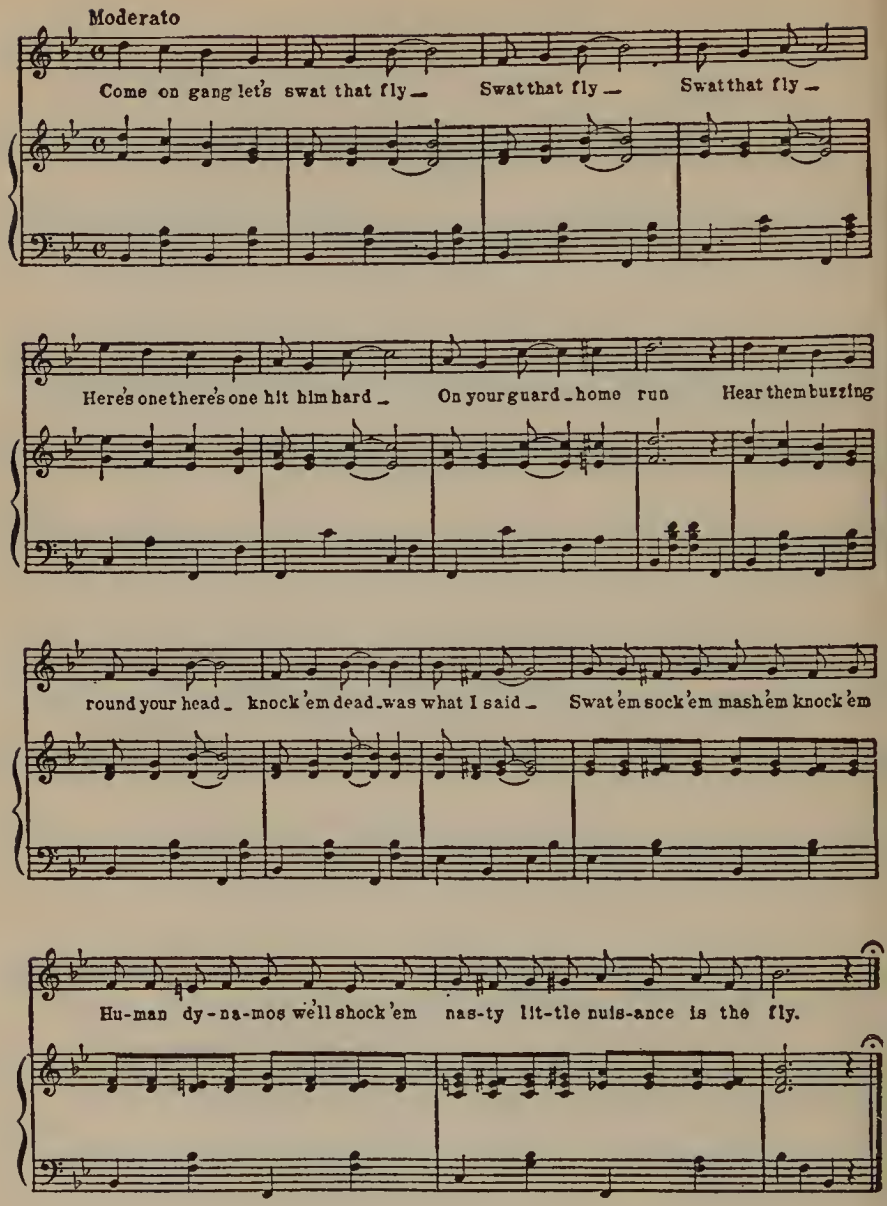
Let's clean up! You shine the cups and saucers,
Let's clean up! You scrub the floor and counters.
Scare away the dirt and let some health and sunshine in,
Polish all the silverware and scour the glass and tin.
Let's clean up! and wash that dirty linen.
Let's clean up! and wear a clean white apron.
You won't know this place when we get through with it to-day,
We will make it healthy for we know that

*HEALTH WILL PAY.*

# Swat That Fly

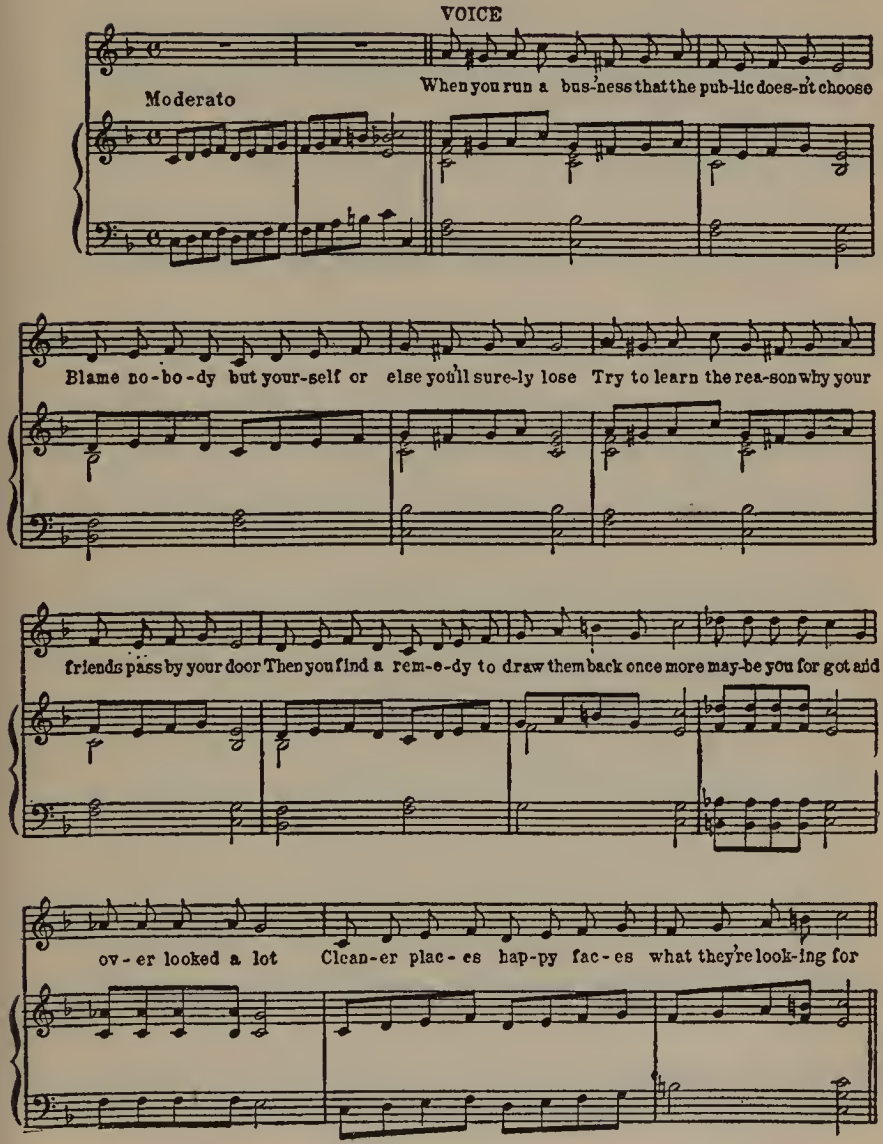
FLOYD K. RUSSELL

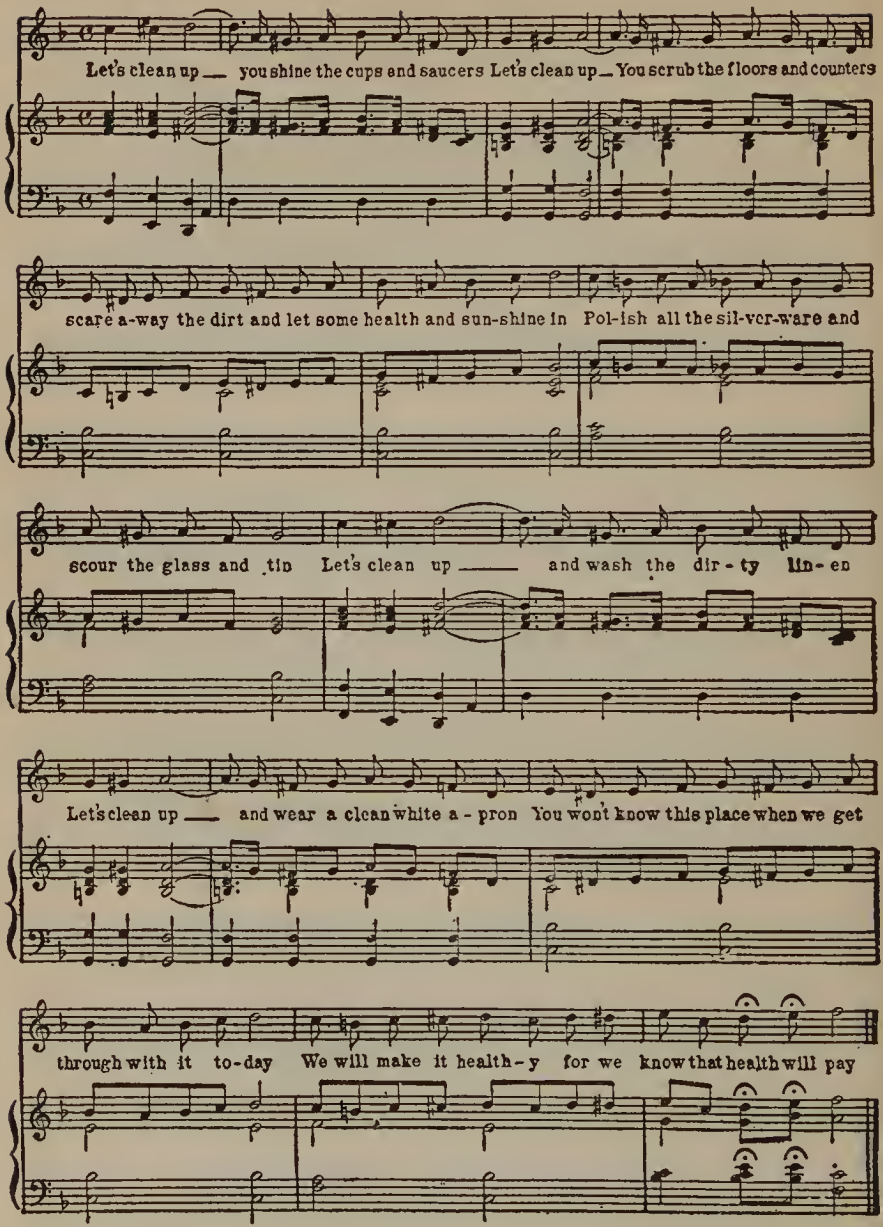

Allegro
8va
Down the streets and av-en-ues at pass-ers by we yell Ex-tra! Ex-tra! here's the news we
Ev-ry year when winter goes and spring is near at hand When the freckles find your nose and
shout so we can sell You say we ought to be in school And may be you are
say ain't na-ture grand Here they come a mil-lion flies, To mul-ti-ply each
right But we ain't found in the Gold-en Rule How to stop our ap-pe-tite.
day So join our com-pa-ny if you are wise For here is what we say.


Moderato
Come on gang let's swat that fly — Swat that fly — Swat that fly —
Here's one there's one hit him hard — On your guard — home run Hear them buzzing
round your head — knock 'em dead — was what I said — Swat 'em sock 'em mash 'em knock 'em
Hu-man dy-na-mos we'll shock 'em nas-ty lit-tle nuis-ance is the fly.

# Clean Up

FLOYD K. RUSSELL.

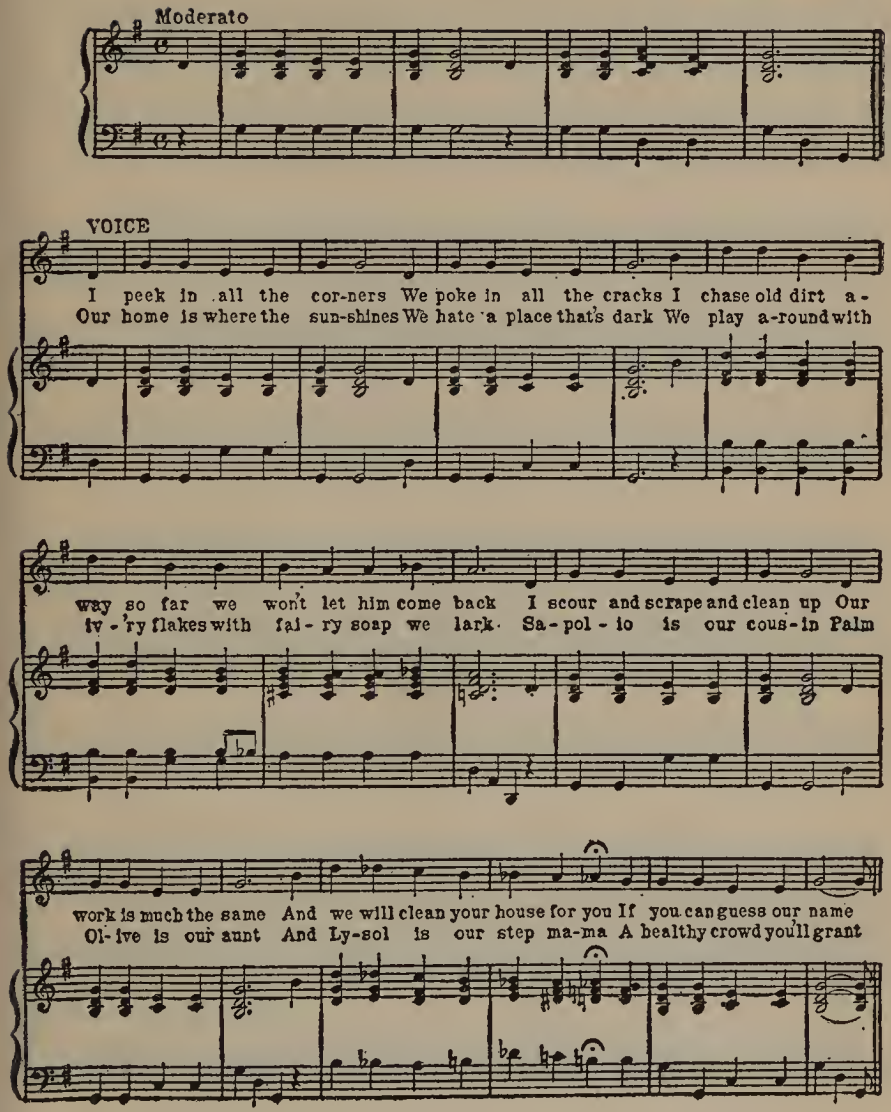

VOICE
Moderato
When you run a bus-'ness that the pub-lic does-n't choose
Blame no-bo-dy but your-self or else you'll sure-ly lose Try to learn the rea-son why your
friends pass by your door Then you find a rem-e-dy to draw them back once more may-be you for got and
ov-er looked a lot Clean-er plac-es hap-py fac-es what they're look-ing for

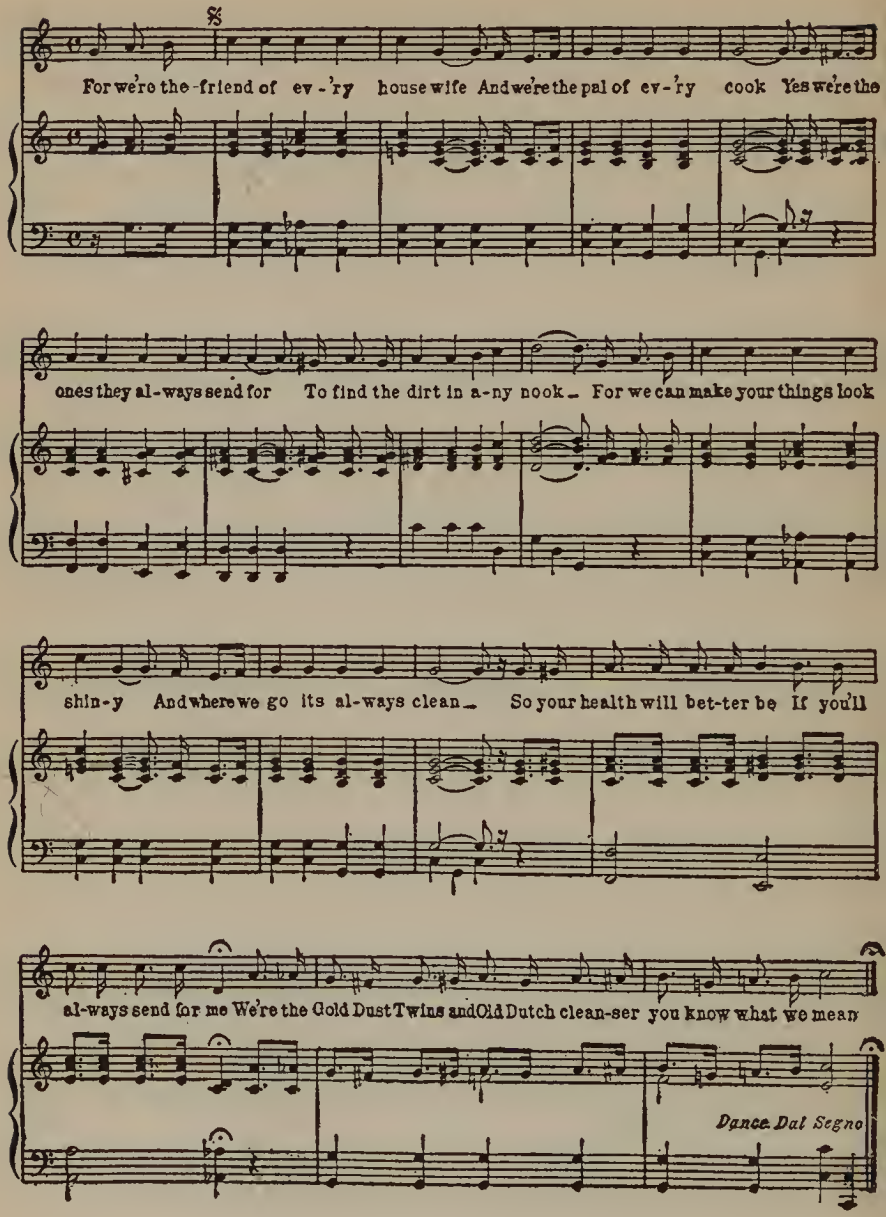

Let's clean up — you shine the cups and saucers Let's clean up — You scrub the floors and counters
scare a-way the dirt and let some health and sun-shine in Pol-ish all the sil-ver-ware and
scour the glass and tin Let's clean up — and wash the dir-ty lin-en
Let's clean up — and wear a clean white a-pron You won't know this place when we get
through with it to-day We will make it health-y for we know that health will pay

# Specialty

**Old Dutch Cleanser and Gold Dust Twins**

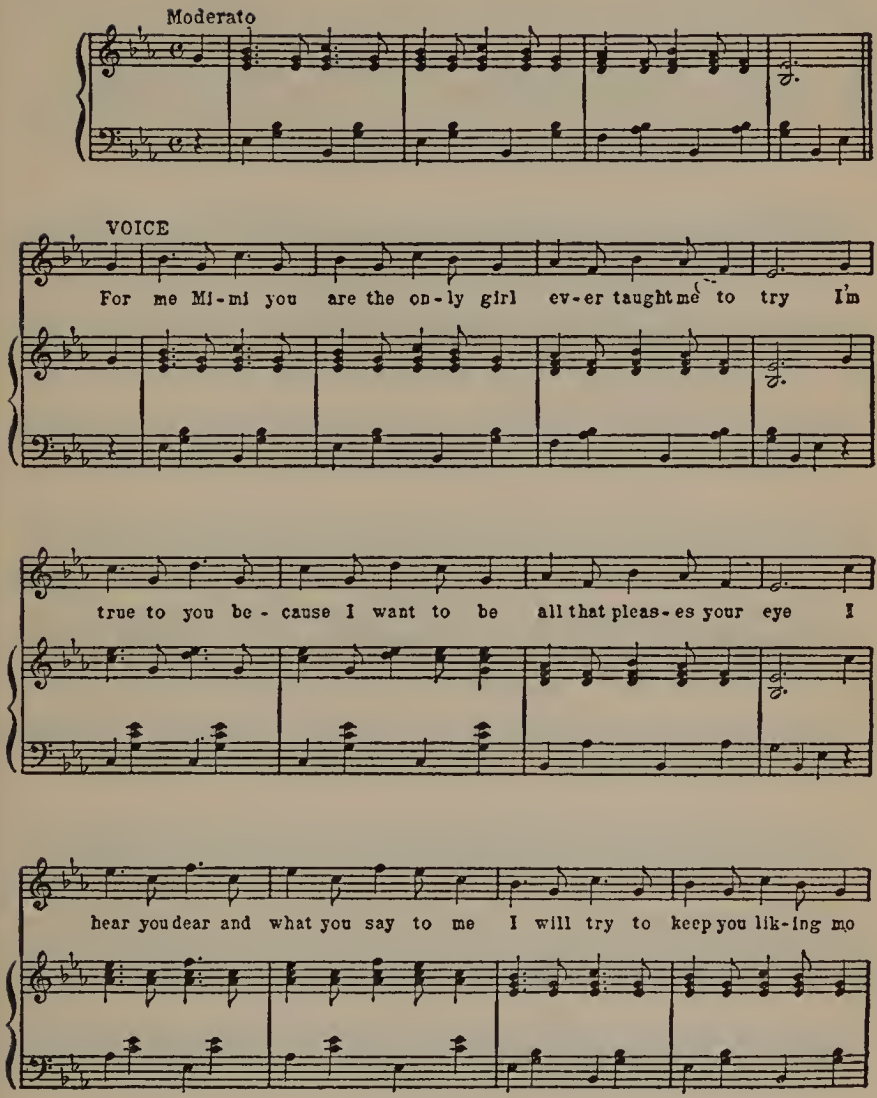
FLOYD K. RUSSELL


Moderato
VOICE
I peek in all the cor-ners We poke in all the cracks I chase old dirt a-
Our home is where the sun-shines We hate a place that's dark We play a-round with
way so far we won't let him come back I scour and scrape and clean up Our
iv-'ry flakes with fai-ry soap we lark Sa-pol-io is our cous-in Palm
work is much the same And we will clean your house for you If you can guess our name
Ol-ive is our aunt And Ly-sol is our step ma-ma A healthy crowd you'll grant


For we're the friend of ev-'ry housewife And we're the pal of ev-'ry cook Yes we're the
ones they al-ways send for To find the dirt in a-ny nook For we can make your things look
shin-y And where we go its al-ways clean So your health will bet-ter be If you'll
al-ways send for me We're the Gold Dust Twins and Old Dutch clean-ser you know what we mean
Dance Dal Segno

# Whisperings Of Love

FLOYD K. RUSSELL


Moderato
VOICE
For me Mi-mi you are the on-ly girl ev-er taught me to try I'm
true to you be-cause I want to be all that pleas-es your eye I
hear you dear and what you say to me I will try to keep you lik-ing mo

Say some day that you will mar-ry me Who? Me You? Of course! Why?
rit.
Andante
I love you dear - ly My fond heart is near - ly
Filled to ov-er flow-ing with a love that you are know-ing dear Please won't you call me
names that will en-thrall me How I long to end this song with whis-per-ings of Love.
rit.

# NELAGONY, OR GOOD WATER *

## *AN INDIAN PLAY WITH MUSIC*

By

ANEMONE PEMBERTON

* Received first prize 1926 playwriting contest for high schools conducted by the National Tuberculosis Association and used by permission of that association.

## CHARACTERS

DAVID BRECKENRIDGE, *a young southern doctor*
HO-TAHU-MOI, *chief of the Indian tribe*
TISHOWANA, *the chieftain's daughter*
SASHEWAWA, *medicine man*
TOM, DAVID'S *colored valet*
TEH-CUM-SAH, *an old Indian*
MAH-SHE-TO-MA, TAHOYA } *young braves*

# NELAGONY, OR GOOD WATER

SCENE: *The forest or any colorful out-door place with a tepee at the right and a tom-tom at the center. Two openings, left and right.*

[*Low, mournful chanting and drum beats are heard as curtain rises. A "brave" sits beating the tom-tom, while the medicine man dances around it. The tribe stands in the background, men, women—some with babies on backs—and children. There are about twenty in the tribe. On soft blankets in front of the small tent rests the dead chief.* TISHOWANA *kneels by his side, her face buried in her hands.*]

SONG: The Appeal (*by the tribe*)

Aluewa! Aluewa! Thou Mighty One,
Save us, thy children, Great Chief of the sun!
Slay him! Slay him! Slay the Mighty Evil,
Who with his breath kills us, your people.

Aluewa! Aluewa! With thy great hand
Take the Evil One from out our land.
Slay him! Slay him! Slay the Mighty Evil,
Who with his breath kills us, your people.

[*Shortly before the close* DAVID *and* TOM *walk in at left,* DAVID *carrying a doctor's case and appearing very bewildered.* TOM, *hands full of luggage, hesitates behind and seems frightened. Soon the tribe notices them and backs noiselessly off stage at right.* TISHOWANA *still kneels beside her father.*]

DAVID [*walking toward* TISHOWANA]. I beg your pardon, Miss . . . but—how stupid. Of course she can't understand me.

TISH [*rises to feet*]. Yes, I know what you speak. Tell me, white man, what you want?

DAVID. Oh! fine! What do I want? At the moment, I should like to know the reason for the very impressive ceremony of which I had the good fortune to be witness.

TISH. Oh! that was my people asking, praying for help from the Great Spirit, the Mighty Magician, who can with his one hand slay this Evil One who has for many moons been sending a fever upon our tribe. First of all to leave us was Wy-e-nah-she, the mightiest warrior of our tribe; then went Lah-wah-wal-la, wife of O-sah-ke-pah, and mother of five men children who followed her to the happy hunting grounds one by one. All these were slain by the Evil Spirit who tortures for many weeks before he slays. And now look you, white man, upon the face of the mighty Hotahu-moi, bravest and kindest of chiefs. Look you upon his pale face! Can you not see the breath of this Evil One? Aluewa! Aluewa! He is dead! dead! our mighty chief, my own father. He has left us to fight alone this fever; left us, his children, and gone on westward, westward. [*Points westward and kneels sorrowfully down beside* HOTAHU-MOI.]

DAVID [*to himself*]. An Evil One, eh? It looks very much like typhoid to me. [*Turns to* TOM, *who has been standing awed and silent during this conversation.*] Set down the grips, Tom. I think we will remain here for a time. These people seem to be in great need of medical aid, and I shall offer myself to their service.

TOM. Yes, sah, marse David, but dese heah people don' look none too peaceful. I's warnin' you, you bettah be kinda keerful. [*Sets baggage down and begins looking about.*]

DAVID. These people are very harmless, Tom, and we are certainly needed here badly. [*Kneels beside the sobbing*

*girl.*] Now, now, Miss chieftainess. Come. Be brave. Your people need you. [*Lifts her to her feet.*] I am going to remain here and fight this Evil One who has killed your father and many others. Won't you tell me your name, fair princess?

TISH. I am called Tishowana. And you, O white man, who are you and from where did you come?

DAVID. My name is David Breckenridge and I am a doctor. Tom and I are from the South, and we are going farther on West to visit my aunt who lives there. I am very happy now that my automobile broke down and sent us seeking a village or a place or lodging, for I can help you and your people if you will let me.

TISH. Doctor Man, I thank you, for great is my fear of this fever. I know you can help, for in the mission school far in the city I learned much of the mighty doctor men and their great power.

DAVID. That is fine of you to believe in me. Tom, will you go and bring the remainder of our provisions from the car? Tishowana, while he is doing this, I shall look over your water supply if you can direct me to it.

TOM. Yes, sah, marse David. [*Exit* TOM *at left.*]

TISH. It is far down the trail. [*Goes to right and calls:*] Tahoya! Tahoya! Kuewai! Kuewai! [*Enter* TAHOYA *at right.*]

TISH. Tahoya, this is a mighty doctor man that the Great Spirit has sent to fight the Evil One. Take him down the trail and show him the stream which gives us water for our thirst.

DAVID. Good-by, Tishowana, I will be back soon.

TISH. Good-by, Doctor Man. [*Exit* TAHOYA *and* DAVID *at right.*]

TISH. Kuewai! my people, Kuewai! [*Enter tribe at right, group on stage.*] Take your mighty chief into the forest. Take the great Ho-tahu-moi into the green woodlands and bury him 'neath the earth, saupa, the black earth, and return when the sun is above you that you may heed

the words of Tishowana, your chieftainess. [*Goes over to the body of* HO-TAHU-MOI.] Farewell, O great and kind Ho-tahu-moi! Farewell, my father. Go on into the west land and prepare a place for your people that we may follow in your footsteps. Farewell! Farewell! [*Four braves carry him out at right. Tribe follows slowly in a procession. Enter* TOM *at left loaded with provisions.*]

TOM. I done been and gone and got dese heah 'visions, marse David. What am I to do wid 'em? Oh! Lordy! he ain't heah. Has you all done scalped him? [*Enter* DAVID *and* TAHOYA *at right.*]

DAVID. No, Tom, I am right here. Set the provisions down and make yourself comfortable. I have work to do.

TOM. Comf'table? Marse David, de ain't no sich word in dis heathen lan'! [*Sets provisions down and exits at left.*]

DAVID. Tishowana, I have found the cause of this dreaded fever whose real name is Typhoid.

TISH. Is that what this Evil One is called?

DAVID. Yes, and the water which you drink gives you this fever.

TISH. Is the breath of the Evil One in the water?

DAVID. Exactly that. Is there no other place where you can get water to drink?

TISH. Far up the mountains there is a little spring; but the trail is rough and the journey long.

DAVID. Perhaps that is true, Tishowana, and yet you must get water from there if you are to save your tribe.

TISH. I will, O Doctor Man, for your words are mighty pools of wisdom.

DAVID. Fair Princess, I am very glad you think so. I have never in all my life wanted to help any one so badly as I do you and your people. [*Enter tribe at right.*]

TISH. My people, for many moons an Evil One has been sending a fever upon us. At sunrise we offered a prayer to the Great Spirit, and he, with his mighty love for his children, has sent a doctor man to fight the Evil One.

Sashewawa has failed to drive away this mighty Evil, and now let us heed the words of the wise white man who was sent to us from the Mighty Magician.

DAVID. Friends, this Evil One who sends his fever upon you dwells in the streams from whose depths you receive your water.

SASHEWAWA. Come, braves! with our arrows we will kill him.

TRIBE [*in unison, holding up their bows and arrows*]. Kill him! Kill him! Kill the Evil One! [*At this point* TOM *enters from left with a roll of blankets. On seeing the warriors with drawn bows apparently aiming at him, he tosses blankets and hat in the air and disappears left.*]

DAVID. No, no, my friends, you cannot kill him. He is not like the mighty bear, nor even like the timid rabbit, for this Evil One is called a germ and is so small you cannot see him. You have drunk the water of the stream and now have within you this germ, this Evil One.

TRIBE [*in unison*]. We will die! Aluewa! We will die!

DAVID. No, you will not die, for I have a mighty needle that can kill this germ. [*Goes to case and brings forth needle.*] See, friends, it has a magic power which alone can slay the Evil One. I shall place the needle in your arm like this [*illustrates on his own arm by placing needle against flesh*], then with the true aim of a hunter who spies the red deer in the forest, I shall kill this deadly germ, kill him with the powerful needle, and thus you will be free from the Evil One. Let some young brave step forward that he may be the first to be freed from this germ that is called Typhoid Fever. [*Advances toward them.*]

TRIBE [*backs fearfully away*]. No! No! It will kill us! No! No!

DAVID. Don't be afraid, my friends. It will kill the Evil One, but it will not harm you.

TRIBE [*shouting*]. No! No! No!

TISH. Oh, Doctor Man, we cannot understand it—your

mighty needle. It is so strange and powerful. My people are afraid, and even I, their chieftainess, fear it.

DAVID. Tishowana, you fear it? Not you, surely?

TISH. Your spirit is brave and good and your words are wisdom, but I cannot understand them.

DAVID [*sadly*]. You do not believe in me then, lovely Tishowana?

TISH. Oh, Doctor Man! It is not that I do not believe in your words. It is only that I am ignorant of your ways—ignorant of the powerful needle. What we cannot understand, we fear.

DAVID. If only I could show you and your people that it is harmless, I could save them from the fever. [*Addresses the tribe.*] Is there not one of you who will be brave enough to allow me to kill the Evil One within him?

TRIBE [*backing still farther away*]. No! No! Oshkee-ka! No!

TEH-CUM-SAH. Young white brave, seventy winters have flown over my head, and seventy summers have I trod the forest path. I have killed the rattlesnake in the summer and tracked the coyote to his den in the winter. Always have I been known as "brave Teh-cum-sah, the mighty," but, White Doctor, I fear your magic needle more than the rattlesnake, more than the coyote.

MAH-SHE-TO-MA. He speaks words of wisdom, O White Man. Though I have seen not many summers, even now they call me "Mah-she-to-mah, the brave one," but I, Mah-she-to-mah, would not brave your needle.

DAVID. Then I have failed to save you. Must I admit defeat and go my way?

TISH. No, no, Doctor Man. [*Rushes to him.*] I, Tishowana, their chieftainess, will brave the magic needle. [*Turns toward tribe.*] Surely, if I am saved, my people, you, too, will let him kill the Evil One within you?

TRIBE [*nod an affirmative and raise arms*]. Ho! Ho!

TEH-CUM-SAH. Go, brave Tishowana. Go! If it kills you not, we follow.

TRIBE [*shouting*]. Ho! Ho! [TISHOWANA *takes the serum. The tribe looks on fearfully. Reënter* TOM.]

TOM. You still alive, marse David?

DAVID. Certainly, Tom, you are just in time to assist me in vaccinating these newly acquired friends.

TOM. Dey is friends now, but de ain't no tellin' what dey 'ud be ef you let dat needle slip. Be mighty keerful, marse David, I shore 'ud like to see my sweet Clarena once mo' befo' I die.

DAVID [*finishing the vaccination*]. Now, lovely Tishowana, the Evil One is killed and you are saved.

TISH. You are wise, oh, very wise, Doctor Man. How could I have doubted you? Come! my people, see! I am saved and the Evil One is killed.

TRIBE. Brave Doctor! Brave Doctor! Ho!

TEH-CUM-SAH. Take me, White Doctor. Take the mighty Teh-cum-sah! [DAVID *begins vaccinating the tribe;* TOM *carries his instruments and supplies.*]

TOM [*after* DAVID *has vaccinated about six*]. Be mighty keerful dere. Don't let dat needle slip.

DAVID. Why, Tom, don't you trust my sureness of hand?

TOM. Yes, sah, but I ain't trustin' dem bows and arrows none too much.

DAVID [*finishing the vaccination*]. Now, my friends, the Evil One is killed, but you must not drink his poisoned water or again he will send his fever upon you. Go up to the mountain spring and bring the good, fresh water down here that you may drink the purest and best. Tom, you may go with them and help.

TOM. Does I has to, marse David?

DAVID. Don't you want to be of help, Tom?

TOM. Ef you put it dat way, I reckons I does, but you shore is makin' slim my chances ob ever seein' my sweet Clarena agin. [*Exit* TRIBE *and* TOM *at right.*]

DAVID. The sun is setting, Tishowana. How beautiful it is in the west!

TISH. Yes, Doctor Man, our land is going to be happy once again since you have shown us the way to health. You have done much for me and my people; I thank you, Brave Doctor.

DAVID. By those words I have been repaid. I love you, Tishowana.

TISH. And—I love you, Doctor Man.

SONG: Sunset [*by* DAVID *and* TISHOWANA]

A beautiful Indian maid are you
With eyes of the darkest raven hue.
Your laugh is the lilt of the flowing brook,
That murmurs gently through a shaded nook.
I take your hand, Tishowana, my own.
The bravest, sweetest girl I've known.

Oh, doctor of mine, you are brave and wise;
Great manliness shines from without your eyes.
You saved my people from the Evil One,
And now, when the day is over and done,
I give you my hand for ever and aye,
And "I love you" are the words that I would say.

(DUET)

In the scarlet west the sun is setting,
And the squirrel in his tree-top is fretting;
The wind whispers gently through giant oaks,
And the fire of health from the wigwam smokes,
Hand in hand we'll follow the winding trail
Over life's mountain peaks, down to the vale.

[TRIBE *returns carrying buckets and bowls of water.* TOM *brings up the rear.*]

TRIBE. Nelagony! Nelagony! [*They set buckets down.*]

TOM. Marse David, when is we gwine to leave this heathen lan' an' go home?

DAVID. How can you talk of home when you see how happy I am!

TOM. Oh, Lordy, dey ain't no mo' chance ob me gittin' to see my sweet Clarena.

[SASHEWAWA *begins to beat the tom-tom.* TRIBE *begins singing. Curtain goes slowly down.*]

SONG: Sleep [*by the* TRIBE]

The black night falls;
The tom-tom calls;
The stars give light;
The fire burns bright.

Come! To the wigwam let us go,
While the winds in the tree-tops blow;
Health and happiness now have we,
From the Evil One we are free.

The night bird screams;
The pale moon beams;
The fireflies peep;
Let us sleep!

INDIAN WORDS PRONOUNCED AND EXPLAINED

*In proper names give all syllables equal accent*

Wy-e-nah-she=Wí-é-ná-shé
Ho-tahu-moi=Ho-ta-moy
Tishowana=Tish-o-wa-na
Teh-cum-sah=Te-cum-sa
Mah-she-to-ma=Ma-she-to-ma
Tahoya=Ta-hoy-a
Lah-wah-wal-la=Lá-wá-wál-lá
O-sah-ke-pah=O-sá-ke-pá
Aluewa=A-loo-wa; an expression of sorrow or grief
Kuewai=Cue-wa; come hither
Oshkeeka=Osh-kee-ka, it is not good; it is bad
Nelagony=Ne-lag-o-ny, means good water. Ne is water, lagony is good. The Indians put the noun before its modifying adjective.

## The Appeal

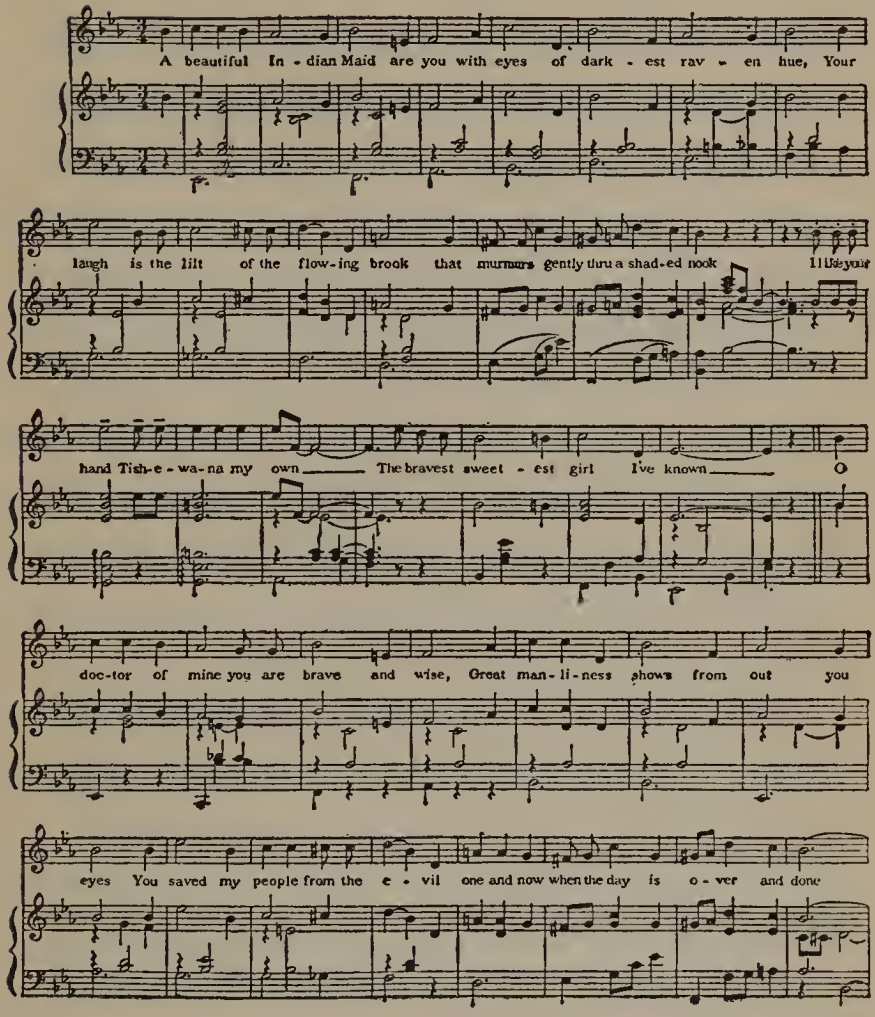
Words by
ANEMONE PEMBERTON

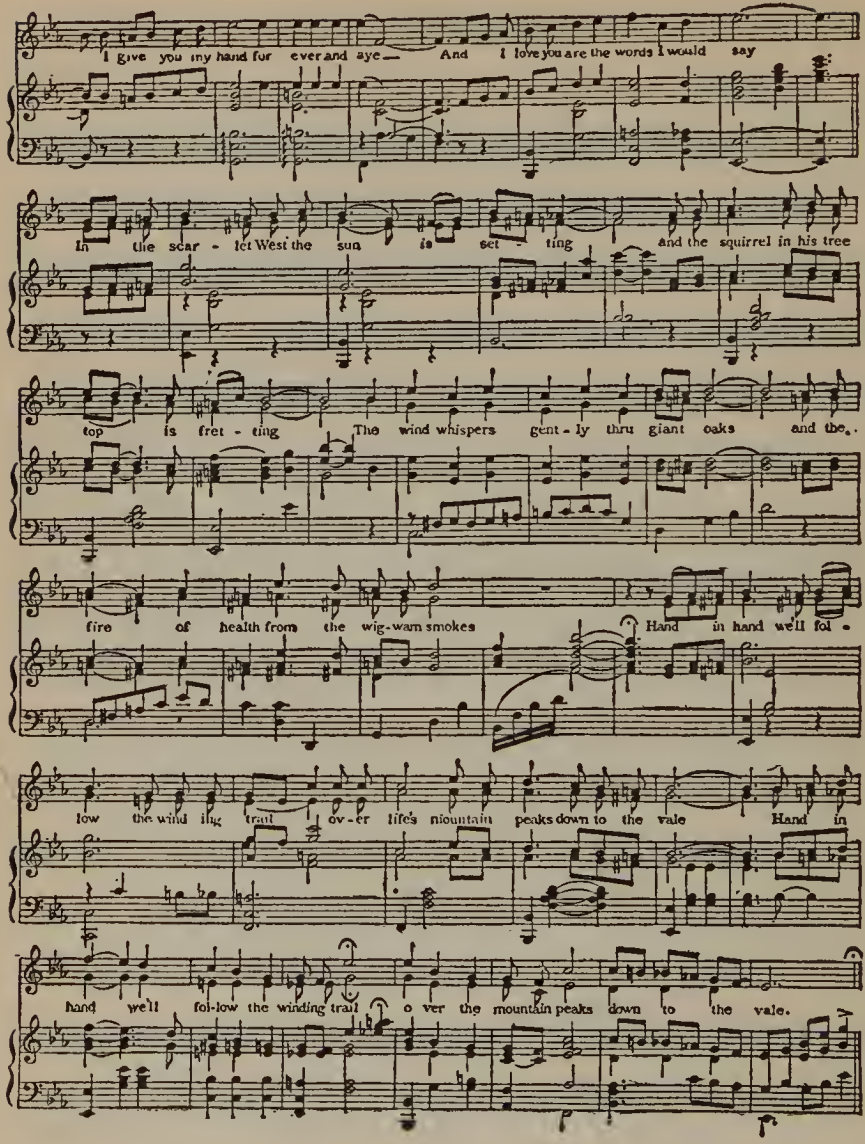
Music by
CALLIE ESTELLE PARSONS

1. Al - ue - wa Al - ue - wa thou migh - ty one
2. Al - ue - wa Al - ue - wa with thy great hand
Save us thy child - ren Great Chief of the sun
Take the E - vil one from out o ur land
Slay him Slay him Slay the Migh - ty e - vil
Slay him Slay him Slay the Migh - ty e - vil
Who with his breath kills us your peo - ple.
Who with his breath kills us your peo - ple

# Sunset

Music by
CARL LEO

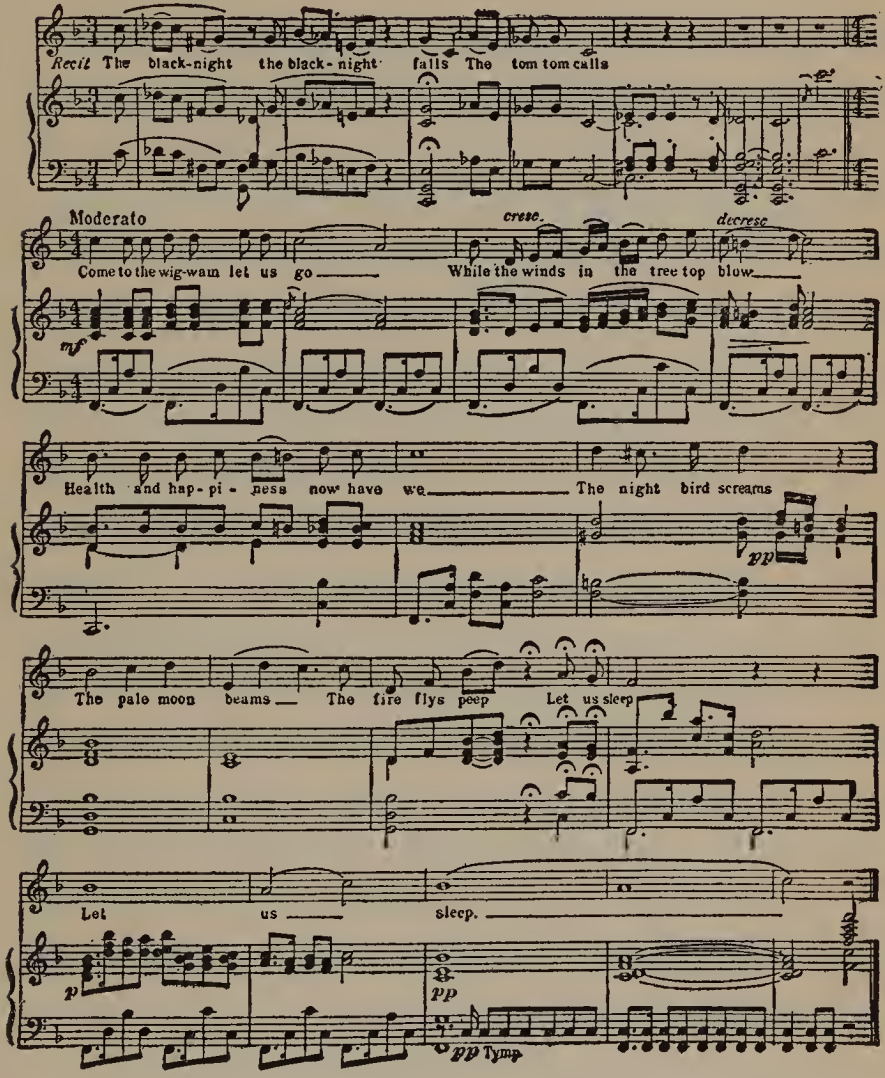

A beautiful In - dian Maid are you with eyes of dark - est rav - en hue, Your
laugh is the lilt of the flow-ing brook that murmurs gently thru a shad-ed nook I like your
hand Tish-e - wa-na my own The bravest sweet - est girl I've known O
doc-tor of mine you are brave and wise, Great man - li - ness shows from out you
eyes You saved my people from the e - vil one and now when the day is o - ver and done


I give you my hand for ever and aye— And I love you are the words I would say
In the scar - let West the sun is set - ting and the squirrel in his tree
top is fret - ting The wind whispers gent - ly thru giant oaks and the
fire of health from the wig-wam smokes Hand in hand we'll fol -
low the wind ing trail ov - er life's mountain peaks down to the vale Hand in
hand we'll fol-low the winding trail o ver the mountain peaks down to the vale.

# Sleep

Music by
ANEMONE PEMBERTON

Music by
CARL LEO



# MUSIC WEEK

# BROTHER MUSICIANS *

## *A COMEDY IN ONE ACT*

By

A. P. SANFORD

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## CHARACTERS

An Organ Grinder
Children of the Street
An Inn-keeper (*Mein host*)
Ludwig van Beethoven
First Policeman
Second Policeman
The Burgomeister
Aldermen
Pedestrians

# BROTHER MUSICIANS

SCENE I: *Street outside an inn.*
SCENE II: *Street outside a police station.*
PLACE: *Vienna*—1798.

## SCENE I

SCENE: *Terrace of an inn abutting on sidewalk. There are small box trees, oleanders in tubs, iron tables and chairs and a bench against the wall. Doorway of inn in center, over doorway the sign of the inn "Zum Schliefen." A stein of beer and a bunch of grapes. Mein host, a stout ruddy man in a white apron stands in the doorway, a napkin over his arm, a large pipe in his mouth. He dusts off the tables, arranges the chairs, regards the ensemble critically as the music of a hand organ is heard up the street playing: "Marlboro s'en va-t-en guerre."* *

*The* ORGAN GRINDER *enters with several* STREET CHILDREN *at his heels, dancing and capering clumsily. Passers-by throw kreutzers to the* ORGAN GRINDER, *who picks them up and counts them, finding he has enough for a stein of beer, he signals the inn-keeper who goes for the beer. The* ORGAN GRINDER *takes the strap of the organ off his shoulder and sets the instrument down tenderly on the bench beside him, mops his brow. Mein host returns with the beer which the man drinks, the children have gone down the street.*

[BEETHOVEN *comes in.* BEETHOVEN *is twenty-eight—of medium height with heavy shoulders, large head and a great*

* The popular air: "We Won't Go Home 'Til Morning."

*deal of dark hair rather long. He carries a sheaf of papers, he is singing gutturally and beating time with the papers.*]

BEETHOVEN. So! A nice quiet place. Gott sei dank. [MEIN HOST *draws out a chair, spreads a cloth on the table.*] Zum Schliefen! Good!

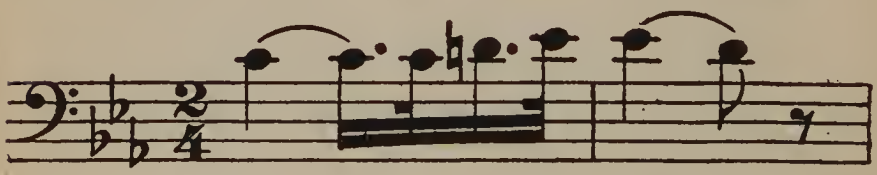
MEIN HOST. Good day, sir.

BEETHOVEN. Yes, yes. [*Looks around.*] A nice place you have here—so quiet—so peaceful. Yes?

MEIN HOST. Yes, mein herr. Yes, very quiet. Some beer perhaps? [BEETHOVEN *humming a phrase from his score does not answer for a moment.*]

BEETHOVEN. Quiet. Yes, nice—such a racket at my house—Kaffee klatsch birthday party—old women, gossip—Himmel! You can't think. I'll have some supper here, yes— All talking at once—playing the piano—singing—horrible. Ach Gott!

MEIN HOST. There is gefülte rinderbrust unt—[*But* BEETHOVEN *is again absorbed in his work, humming:*



*waving his papers, punctuating phrases with thumps on the table. The* ORGAN GRINDER *exchanges a wink with* MEIN HOST, *taps his forehead significantly. Presently* BEETHOVEN *signals the innkeeper.*]

MEIN HOST. Some beer perhaps and—

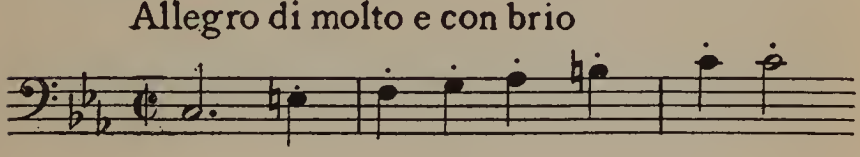
BEETHOVEN. Yes, a stein—and liverwurst—and pumpernickel. [*Gives a sigh of satisfaction as he spreads out his papers and begins to write.* MEIN HOST *brings the food and sets it before him. Mechanically without taking his eyes off the score and humming phrases between bites.* BEETHOVEN *begins to eat. The* ORGAN GRINDER *who has finished his beer and a roll he had brought out of his pocket, wipes his mouth, throws his organ over his shoulder, counts*

*the coppers he has left, shakes his head sadly and begins to play. The organ out of tune alternately wheezes and screeches in an attempt to play the "Marlboro" again.* BEETHOVEN *is frantic, throws down his pencil, puts hands to his ears, his face is contorted with agony, disappointment, anger—*]

BEETHOVEN. A quiet place! There is no such thing! Not in all the world! Inn-keeper come here! [CHILDREN *come up to him dancing and laughing.*] Here you—stop that noise. This is no place to make such an infernal racket. Get out! Go away! Can't you see I'm busy. My God, am I to lose the whole of my allegro when it's just beginning to go as I want it! [*The* ORGAN GRINDER *moves a little farther away but continues to play for the* CHILDREN.] Thousand devils! It's as bad as the Kaffee-klatsch. Is there no place anywhere for a man who wants quiet to work? Landlord!

MEIN HOST. You are a troublesome fellow. You're making a deal of a racket yourself! [ORGAN *continues.*]

BEETHOVEN [*humming*].



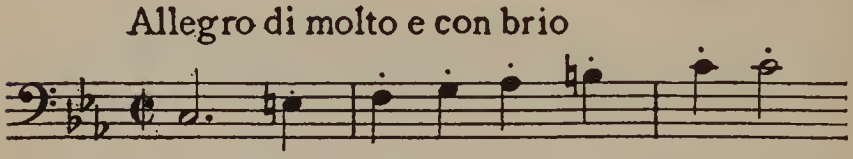

Dumm kopf! I'm making music. I'm a musician!

MEIN HOST. So is he! [*Nodding toward the* ORGAN GRINDER.]

BEETHOVEN [*horrified at the thought, dives into his pockets, brings out a handful of coins, gives them all to the* ORGAN GRINDER]. Here, go away—down there.

ORGAN GRINDER [*examines coins, tests the silver ones on his teeth, overwhelmed by* BEETHOVEN'S *generosity—he takes off his cap, bows*]. Thank you, sir. You wish me to go away? Yes, yes. Down by the bridge—it would sound nice perhaps? Ya?

BEETHOVEN [*frantic*]. No, no, *under* the bridge! Drown yourself! And your music-box! [ORGAN GRINDER *taps his forehead again significantly and goes off followed by the* CHILDREN *tapping their foreheads and mimicking* BEETHOVEN'S *singing which has begun again on the same theme:*




BEETHOVEN *searches for fresh sheets of paper, does not find any, pushes plate, etc., aside and begins writing on the table cloth.* MEIN HOST *comes to clear away and sees score being written on his table cloth.*]

MEIN HOST. Here, sir, you can't do that, spoiling my table cloth! [BEETHOVEN *absorbed does not hear.*] Your bill is two florins. [*Stands and waits a moment then speaks again in a very loud voice.*] Your bill is two florins, I said. Besides, you must pay for my table cloth, Herr musician!

BEETHOVEN. Yes, yes. Two florins. [*He reaches for his purse, does not find it. Turns out all of his pockets, finds them empty, except for pencils, violin strings, scraps of paper, sits down again.*] I'm sorry, I've left my money at home—I will fetch it to-morrow. [*Goes on with his writing on the table cloth.*]

MEIN HOST. That's a fine story—that doesn't go. Come, pay up—you've spoiled my table cloth. Look at it! [*Tries to take cloth off from table.* BEETHOVEN *spreads his arms over it protectingly.*]

BEETHOVEN. What is a table cloth? Besides it will be immortal, your miserable table cloth. But—you don't know who I am. I forgive you—you have not recognized me. [*Draws himself up.*] I am Beethoven!

MEIN HOST. So you have the same name as our great composer—no matter, I want my two florins—and the table

cloth it is worth ten more. Twelve florins in all. Come, I want my money. Vagabond, I want my money.

BEETHOVEN. But I *am* the composer. I *am* Beethoven.

MEIN HOST. Beethoven! [*Laughs.*] I suppose you think you are—you look a lot like Beethoven! Look at your coat! You are a loafer, that is what you are—eating my supper and not a copper in your pocket. And your hat! Beethoven! Gott im Himmel!

BEETHOVEN. The Burgomeister knows me—send for the Burgomeister, he will pay for your table cloth. Now please —go away and do not interrupt me any more, I must finish this movement. [MEIN HOST *tries to remove table cloth again, struggles with* BEETHOVEN *for possession of it—both now angry and unreasonable, breathless with vituperation. Enter* FIRST POLICEMAN.]

MEIN HOST. Here, arrest this man. He's a beggar. A vagrant. He's eaten and he refuses to pay—and my table cloth—see what he's done to it!

FIRST POLICEMAN. Here, come along with me. A crazy man! [*Blows his whistle,* SECOND POLICEMAN *comes running, together they overpower* BEETHOVEN, *who hugs to his breast his sheaf of papers and the table cloth. They exit,* BEETHOVEN *still protesting. The* ORGAN GRINDER *comes on grinding his organ,* CHILDREN *following as curtain falls.*]

END OF SCENE I

## SCENE II

*The morning following. Street outside police station. Enter the two policemen,* BURGOMEISTER *and* ALDERMEN.

FIRST POLICEMAN [*to* SECOND POLICEMAN]. But how could I know? He *looked* like a tramp all right.

SECOND POLICEMAN. And swiping the table cloth! I'd say he's *ferickt.* I leave it to anybody!

First Policeman [*in awe*]. But Beethoven!

Second Policeman. Beethoven!

Aldermen [*in chorus*]. Beethoven!!

Burgomeister. The Great Master, you fools. The only Beethoven, that's who you've got locked up. Go bring him out now and see to it that you apologize properly. You must have been drunk, both of you. We will be the laughing stock of all Vienna for our stupidity. Ask him to graciously pardon you. We'll wait here and receive him in state.

Alderman. And apologize. We'll all apologize. The honor of our city is at stake. [Policemen *go into police station.*] I shall bring it before the council at our next meeting that every officer on the force must be able to recognize every visiting celebrity and genius on sight.

Other Aldermen [*in chorus*]. Good! Good!

Alderman. He tried to tell them he was Ludwig van Beethoven and the idiots wouldn't listen. They said they thought he was putting something over on them.

Burgomeister [*in despair*]. They dared to lay hands on him—the Master—like a common tramp! A loafer! Mein Gott!

Alderman. But this is a bad business. How would it be if we gave him a banquet? A breakfast at the town hall?

Other Aldermen. That's the thing—a banquet! [*They all stand hats in hands waiting for* Beethoven *to come out. There is a sound of altercation from within. The two officers come out alone.*]

First Policeman. He refuses to come out!

Second Policeman. He will not listen to us. We told him the Herr Burgomeister waited without.

Burgomeister. To escort him to his house— Did you say that, Dummhead?

First Policeman. Yes, sir. In the official carriage. I showed him the carriage from the window, with the grooms waiting at the horses' heads and everything.

SECOND POLICEMAN. But he will not stir out of his cell.

FIRST POLICEMAN. The jailer says his candle was burning all night.

ALDERMAN. The disgrace of his arrest has gone to his head. How will he survive it?

BURGOMEISTER. How will *we* survive it? The disgrace is *ours!* I will go myself and fetch him. [BURGOMEISTER *goes inside while others wait in trepidation, the policemen standing at salute each side of the door.* BEETHOVEN *emerges with his arm around the* BURGOMEISTER'S *shoulders. They are both laughing, their arms full of the sheets of music and the table cloth.*]

ALDERMEN [*bowing*]. Good morning, Master!

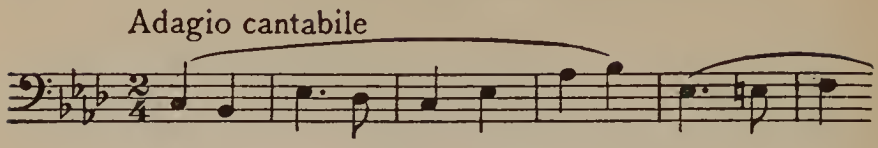
BEETHOVEN. Good morning. [*Sees* POLICEMEN.] Send these men away, they annoy me. [*Looks back regretfully at the police station, sighs.*] I was so happy in there, Herr Burgomeister. So nice and quiet a place to work. Why, I have almost finished my second movement. Quiet! No gossip—no laughing. Beautiful, quiet—the heavenly sounds flow and flow from here [*taps his head*] to my pencil!

BURGOMEISTER [*soothingly*]. It was all a terrible mistake. Our whole city is humiliated that these stupid men should have arrested you. They shall be dismissed from the force, I assure you, Herr Beethoven.

BEETHOVEN. No. No. They were everything that is kind and considerate in that place—no one spoke to me—heavenly consummation— So blissfully quiet. In your police station. I had a horrible time yesterday, Herr Burgomeister—a Kaffee klatsch in my house and then that old miscreant with his organ it was too much! And all the time the strains of my symphony surging through me like —like the sea—demanding to be put on paper!

BURGOMEISTER. And the table cloth? [*Helps to unfold it, together he and* BEETHOVEN *hold it like a score.*]

BEETHOVEN. Ach so—the table cloth. Behold! This is the way it goes—the second movement—




[*The* ORGAN GRINDER *and* CHILDREN *come on—he is playing "Marlboro."*]

BEETHOVEN [*turns, recognizes the old man, speaks kindly*]. So, we are brother musicians, you and I. That is a nice tune you are playing. [*He sings it.*] A nice tune. I will use that some time in a battle piece I am thinking about—see how it would go in a battle, my friend. [BEETHOVEN *booms out the song, the* BURGOMEISTER *and* ALDERMEN *join in. All go down the street together, singing, followed by the two policemen joyously goose-stepping, the* ORGAN GRINDER *gayly bringing up the rear, his organ wheezing out the accompaniment.*]

[CURTAIN]

# SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER *

By

JAMES FRANCIS COOKE

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## CHARACTERS

RICHARD WAGNER. *In the first act he appears as a child, in the second as a young man, and in the third as a man over sixty.*

JOHANNA GEYER, *the widow of* WAGNER'S *father who has married the actor,* LUDWIG GEYER

LUDWIG GEYER, WAGNER'S *step-father*

ROSALIE WAGNER, WAGNER'S *sister*

KLARA WAGNER, WAGNER'S *sister*

ALBERT WAGNER, WAGNER'S *brother*

CARL VON WEBER, *the great operatic composer*

MINNA WAGNER, WAGNER'S *first wife*

GIACOMO MEYERBEER, *the famous composer of operas*

EMPEROR WILLIAM OF GERMANY

EMPEROR DOM PEDRO OF BRAZIL

FRANZ LISZT

EDWARD GRIEG, *the famous Norwegian composer*

CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS, *the noted French composer*

THE GRAND DUKE VLADIMIR, *a Russian Grand Duke*

THE SULTAN OF TURKEY

THE VICEROY OF EGYPT

# SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER

## ACT I

SCENE: *The home of* WAGNER'S *stepfather,* LUDWIG GEYER, *in Dresden. The living room is not large and is littered with books. A piano stands in one corner and an artist's easel stands in the other. There are present* WAGNER'S *mother,* FRAU GEYER, *his brother* ALBERT (*fourteen years older than* WAGNER) *and his sisters,* ROSALIE, LOUISA *and* KLARA. LUDWIG GEYER *is ill and is propped up in a chair. The time is in* 1821. WAGNER *is eight years of age.*

GEYER. This sickness is nothing, my dear Rosalie, it will soon pass away and I shall be back in the theater again. Perhaps you may all see me do Hamlet, the play by the English Shakespeare.

FRAU GEYER. Ludwig, you are always so brave and so kind. What will happen to me and to the children if anything should happen to you? I have been a widow once,—think of it, a widow with nine children! If you had not come to our support we might have starved.

GEYER. Don't think of it. Look, I am strong and can lift myself in my chair. Be of good cheer. In a day or so I shall be myself again. Richard, what are you doing?

RICHARD WAGNER. Nothing, only looking out of the window.

FRAU GEYER. A most extraordinary child. He stands there day after day looking for the hour that von Weber comes from the opera house.

RICHARD WAGNER [*excitedly*]. Look, there goes the greatest man in all the world! Mother, he's coming here. It's the great von Weber!

ALBERT. Hurry, Louise, straighten up the room if the great conductor is coming.

ROSALIE. Oh, what an honor! Father, it is because you are sick.

LUDWIG GEYER. Nonsense, Rosalie, it is because he wants to make a place for you in some new opera. He promised me that he would give you a chance. Mother, put a new comforter over me!

KLARA. Wouldn't it be fine if he could make places on the stage at the opera house for all of us,—that is, for father, Rosalie, Albert, Louise and myself?

LUDWIG GEYER. What a wonderful family this is indeed,—nearly every one of us with our heartstrings tied to the theater,—all but little Richard.

RICHARD WAGNER. But mine are too, father.

LUDWIG. Ah, I have hoped it but no one knows what a harum-scarum boy like you may do. [*Enter the great composer,* WEBER.]

FRAU GEYER. Welcome to our humble home, Herr von Weber.

VON WEBER. No home is humble where Ludwig Geyer resides. How are you, my dear man? When can I expect you back in the cast of *Der Freyschutz?*

LUDWIG GEYER. Who knows, perhaps I may be back tomorrow, perhaps,— [GEYER *is faint and his wife runs to his side.*]

VON WEBER. Nonsense, Geyer, you must not let dark thoughts haunt you. Be brave. I know that you have been sick for a long time, but courage, man, you must get well. What new tricks has little Richard been up to?

GEYER. Richard, what did you do the other day on the roof of the school?

RICHARD WAGNER. Oh, it was glorious. First I tossed one of the boys' hats on the topmost part of the roof, then

I had to climb out on the slippery tiles way up in the air to get it. A crowd gathered in the street and shouted to the teachers that I would fall and kill myself. I loved it. One of the teachers was so mad that he shouted that I would end my life on the gallows.

WEBER [*laughing*]. Always up to some new pranks, eh?

RICHARD. Won't you play something from *Der Freyschutz,* Master?

VON WEBER. With the greatest of pleasure. [WEBER *sits at the piano and plays airs from Der Freyschutz in pianoforte arrangement.*]

RICHARD WAGNER. Mother, may I have a few cents to buy some music paper? I am going to write a great opera.

LUDWIG GEYER. A great opera. Yesterday you were asking me for a canvas on which to paint a portrait of the King,—nothing was big enough to suit you.

MOTHER GEYER. The day before that, Herr von Weber, he used up all my writing paper planning out a great tragedy in which nearly everybody was to be killed.

VON WEBER. Let him become what he wants to become. My father, you know, was an army officer before he became a musician. All the armies in the world could not have kept him away from music.

RICHARD WAGNER. Some day I want to write great operas in the world like your *Der Freyschutz.*

VON WEBER. Ah, there will be many much greater ones than that written.

GEYER. You are too modest, Master.

VON WEBER. I have only made a beginning. German art in music is but a baby yet. [*Lays his hand on* WAGNER'S *head.*] Who knows who shall carry the work on?

GEYER. Has Richard any ear for music, mother?

FRAU GEYER. Alas! if Richard did less dreaming and more study it would be better for him. Look at his brothers and sisters here who have all made a place for themselves in the theater,—is nothing to be said about them? Must

all our attention go to this eight-year-old boy? For shame, Richard, you are only a child!

RICHARD WAGNER. Children grow up. Beethoven was a child once and so was Shakespeare. Oh, if I could only make the name of Richard Geyer some day as great as that of Shakespeare, as von Weber, as Beethoven.

GEYER. Alas! my dear Richard, it would not be Richard Geyer but Richard Wagner.

VON WEBER. A pity that he cannot carry down the name of a great artist instead of a police court clerk.

GEYER. With me the name of Geyer will die.

RICHARD WAGNER [*taking his father's hand and crying*]. It will never die in my memory, father, it will never die.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

SCENE: *It is the year* 1841. WAGNER *is now twenty-eight years old and has married* MINNA PLANER, *an actress. After many struggles and failures he finds himself in poverty in Paris, France. The room is very poorly furnished. In the center there is a plain wooden table heaped up with music and music paper. In another corner there is a piano littered with music. Only* WAGNER *and his wife are present.* WAGNER *is sitting at the table writing. After some time he looks, throws down his pen and speaks in disgust.*

WAGNER. I can't go any longer. This life is killing me.

MINNA WAGNER. Courage, my dear Richard, courage. You are only suffering what many men of genius must suffer.

WAGNER. Minna, you are a puzzle to me. One moment you beg me to go on and the next you are blaming me for not earning my salt.

MINNA WAGNER. But I do want to live decently and I do want pretty dresses like other women.

WAGNER. Alas! you would sell my career for a few colored rags. [*Rises and paces the floor.*] One more week of this life and I shall kill myself or go to America or something like that.

MINNA WAGNER. Things were no better when we were in Riga. We had to leave Russia to get away from our debts. It is terrible, Richard, terrible.

WAGNER. What are we to do? Here I am writing musical trash, cheap piano pieces, cornet arrangements, just to keep food in our mouths and all the time my great ideas are being wasted. Think of it,—all I have sold this week are three songs for a few florins.

MINNA WAGNER. Won't any one help you?

WAGNER. Meyerbeer said he was coming in this morning to help us plan. Perhaps his Jewish mind may point a way out. You see, his people are rich and he thinks of money in everything he does. [*A knock at the door.*]

MINNA WAGNER. What is that? Another bill?

WAGNER. Open the door. [MINNA WAGNER *opens the door and a servant of the house hands in a letter.*]

MINNA WAGNER. I told you it was another bill.

WAGNER. What can we do now? Our last pennies went out for bread to-day and you, Minna, have pawned all your wedding jewelry. [*Opens the letter.*] Minna, Minna, what shall I do? My Columbus Overture that I sent to the Orchestra in London is gone.

MINNA WAGNER. It has sunk on a steamer crossing the channel?

WAGNER. Alas! No, I was too poor to send them return postage and they have sold it as waste paper. Think of my great overture going as junk at a few cents a pound! Oh, poverty, poverty, when shall we be delivered from this terrible poverty!

MINNA WAGNER. Richard, you are getting terribly excited. Go to the piano and calm yourself for a while. Play

some of those lovely melodies you have been composing. [*Here it is possible for the teacher to introduce pianoforte arrangements from any of the* WAGNER *operas. Another knock at the door and* MINNA *opens it.* MEYERBEER, *the popular composer of grand operas of the day, enters.*]

MEYERBEER. Ah, my dear Wagner, busy as usual, I see.

WAGNER. Busy? If I didn't work day and night we would starve.

MEYERBEER. Ah, but I have good news for you. They are going to buy your opera, *The Flying Dutchman,* at the great opera house.

WAGNER. Oh, joy, Minna, did you hear that? My *Flying Dutchman* is to be given at the Grand Opera. Now I can get money and go on and write the great operas. Blessings on you, Meyerbeer. This is a great day in my life. Now I shall start to write Lohengrin, Tannhauser and all those great legends about the Nibelungen. No more poverty, but fame and success and happiness.

MEYERBEER. Not so fast, my friend, they are going to produce only half of your opera, *The Flying Dutchman.*

WAGNER. Half of my opera? that is nonsense. They must give it all or nothing. How can one produce half of an opera?

MEYERBEER. Prepare yourself for a disappointment. They will have none of your music. All they want is the libretto you have written to the opera.

WAGNER [*tears around the room*]. Thieves, lunatics, murderers! they shall not have it, I say.

MINNA WAGNER. Have sense, Richard. Now you are acting just as you did on the day when your dog was stolen.

WAGNER. Everything is stolen from me, oh, first my dog, then my overture and now my opera.

MINNA WAGNER. How much do they offer for the opera book, Herr Meyerbeer?

WAGNER. I shall not sell the libretto alone. I would sell it for waste paper first,—like my Columbus Overture.

MEYERBEER. They will give five hundred francs.

WAGNER. Five hundred francs for the work of a year and then throw away all the wonderful music that I have written?

MEYERBEER. Ah, but you don't have to do that.

WAGNER. What do you mean?

MEYERBEER. We will sell them the use of the libretto and say nothing about your music. They will have that jackass Dietsch make the music for it and it will fail, as most of his things do. They will be out five hundred francs and you will lose nothing. What do you say?

WAGNER. Meyerbeer, you are a sly fox.

MINNA WAGNER [*holding a dinner plate before* RICHARD]. Think how little has been on these plates for days.

WAGNER. Go back and tell the opera directors that I will sell them the book of my opera without the music and make it clear to them that this bargain will go down in the history of music to show what big fools are at the head of the Grand Opera in this city.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT III

An imaginary fantasy showing Wagner's hour of triumph.

SCENE: *A room in the Great Theater that has been built at Bayreuth for the sole purpose of producing* WAGNER'S *operas properly. The time is in the summer of* 1876. *The event is one of the greatest in the musical world.* WAGNER *is now at the very height of his career and great musicians from all countries have come to pay him homage. With them are Emperors, Kings, Queens, the Sultan, Grand Dukes, Princes, etc. The room is a simple one and is decorated with green*

*branches of trees.* WAGNER *stands at one end and the great personages also stand in line. This imaginary fantasy represents only historical personages who attended the first festival.*

WAGNER.

My noble patrons I address ye.
Here we find to-day a triumph
After years and years of struggle.
Your august presence confers on music
Greater honor than ever shown before.

EMPEROR WILLIAM OF GERMANY.

Thou hast brought great fame to the land of thy birth.
Germany stands crowned before the world to-day.

WAGNER.

Your Imperial Majesty,
Do not think that in this hour
I can forget the priceless help
That His Majesty our King
Ludwig the Second of Bavaria
Has given to this grand project.
Without his generous aid
This great building and my work
Could never exist.

GUESTS PRESENT.

All honor to His Majesty, King Ludwig of Bavaria!

EMPEROR DOM PEDRO OF BRAZIL.

I bring thee greetings from the New World.

WAGNER.

The New World has been most kind to me.
Both in North and South America I have many friends.

FRANZ LISZT.

No more than in the Old World, my son.

EDWARD GRIEG.

From the great North I bring thee greetings!
We join as one to praise thy art.

WAGNER.

The North as yet is young in music,
Some day from Norway and from Russia
The World will hear great things.

GRAND DUKE VLADIMIR.

In the name of the Czar I thank you for that.

SAINT-SAENS.

From the sister land of France I bring thee greetings!

WAGNER.

Years ago I starved in Paris.

SAINT-SAENS.

But Paris shall one day crown you among the kings of music.

SULTAN OF TURKEY.

From the East I bring you greetings.

VICEROY OF EGYPT.

And I from the land of the Pharaohs greet thee.

WAGNER.

Many thanks to your majesties.
Some day the music of the East
Will thrill the world of art.
[*A blast from a trumpet is heard.*]
And now, my honored friends, we will go to the Festival Hall
To dedicate this temple of art to all mankind for all time.

[CURTAIN]

[*At the conclusion of this play a program of* WAGNER'S *works may be given.*]

# BOOK WEEK

# THE BIRTHDAY PARTY *

*A COMEDY FOR A NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS FROM EIGHT TO TEN YEARS OF AGE*

By

A. P. SANFORD

* Royalty for performance $5.00, payable to author, care publisher.

## CHARACTERS

A Poor Boy
His Mother
Alice in Wonderland and the Rabbit
Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf
Cinderella
Bluebeard's Wife
Bluebeard
Ali Baba
Aladdin
Genius
Oliver Twist
Robin Hood
Friar Tuck
Silver
Little Lord Fauntleroy
Captain Kidd
Huckleberry Finn
Tom Sawyer
Paul Revere

# THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

SCENE: *A bedroom in a poor little boy's house. There is a cot, a chair, a small table and over the cot a shelf of books. The books are torn and dog's-eared. It is evening. Enter the little boy and his mother. The little boy is in his night clothes, the mother poorly dressed is tired and hurried looking. She carries a cup of milk and a candle. The little boy carries a book.*

LITTLE BOY. Won't you read just five minutes more, mother?

MOTHER. No, dear, it's after eight.

LITTLE BOY. But it's such a dangerous place to leave them over night, out in the forest all alone, mother.

MOTHER. Now don't argue with mother. Drink your milk and say your prayers like a good boy.

LITTLE BOY [*reluctantly puts book on shelf, begins to drink his milk, stops*]. Mother! Can't I have a birthday party?

MOTHER. Your birthday *is* to-morrow, isn't it? Well, mother'll get you a nice pair of shoes, to wear to school.

LITTLE BOY. Oh, goody, but that's not a *party,* mother. All the other boys have parties. I want a party.

MOTHER. You know mother can't afford parties.

LITTLE BOY. Did I ever have a party with a big cake, when I was too small to remember? [MOTHER *shakes her head.*] I do want a party—please, mother dear.

MOTHER. You know it's no good teasing when mother says no—come say your prayers.

LITTLE BOY [*kneeling*]. Now I lay me down to sleep. Please God make me a good big boy and oh, give me a birth-

day party—Amen. [*Climbs into bed.*] Can't I read just five minutes, mother?

MOTHER. Well, only five minutes, and be sure you blow out the candle. [*Kisses him.*] Good night, dear. [MOTHER *goes out. The* LITTLE BOY *takes down one book after another, turns the leaves, chuckles, puts them all back at last on the shelf.*]

LITTLE BOY. If God only would! [*He blows out the candle and pulls covers over his head. The room becomes very dim. The figure of the* LITTLE BOY *lying in the bed can be discerned through all the following scene. After the lapse of a few moments the gray flat curtains which form the rear wall of the bedroom are drawn apart revealing a large room, heavy hangings at windows, a closet with door at one side, table, flowers, chairs and shelves of books. Enter* BLUEBEARD, *dragging by the hair of her head his wife whom he has just killed. They are both dressed in medieval costume.*]

BLUEBEARD. Lucky I came early. Wonder where there's a closet? [*Opens door of closet.*] Good! Nice handy house, this! [*Chucks wife inside, locks door and puts key in his pocket, turning to greet* ALICE *who has just come in from Wonderland.* ALICE *is in mid-Victorian dress, curls, pantalettes, a small foolish hat with hanging ribbons.*]

BLUEBEARD. Hello, my dear! [*Makes up to her.*]

ALICE. Hello, Bluebeard! How many wives have you killed up to now?

BLUEBEARD. How people do gossip about one. [*Changing the subject.*] But you seem distressed. What is the matter. Tears in your eyes. Naughty! Naughty!

ALICE. Oh, dear, he's gone again!

BLUEBEARD. Your husband?

ALICE. No. The Rabbit. He was to meet me at the party.

BLUEBEARD. Don't worry, my dear, he'll show up, he's probably somewhere, spoiling a lettuce bed. Rabbits will be rabbits, you know. [BLUEBEARD *and* ALICE *sit on sofa*

*and talk. Enter* ALI BABA. ALI BABA *has a sack of faggots over his shoulder, is in oriental dress with a turban, wide baggy trousers, etc.*] This must be the place. [*Tries to open the locked closet door.*] What was it the Captain said? [*Thumps his head.*] Open barley! No, it wasn't that—some other kind of grain—Open Sesame—that's it. [*Strikes door three times.*] "Open, Sesame." [*The door flies open,* BLUEBEARD'S *wife falls into* ALI BABA'S *arms. Just then* ALADDIN *comes in dressed as a little Chinese boy, he is swinging an old brass lamp.*]

ALADDIN. Hello, Ali Baba! What's wrong here? The lady seems ill.

ALI BABA. Ill? She's dead. Feel her! [*Together they put her down carefully, a pillow under her head.* BLUEBEARD *absorbed in* ALICE *pays no attention.*] Congratulations, old chap, I've just heard about your good luck with the lamp.

ALADDIN. Good luck! Well, I'm not so sure about that! I'm sick of it. You can't touch the darned thing unless bags of gold, jewels or palaces spring at you and mess the place all up—silver dishes and plates of food—you can't imagine—I'm fed up with the lamp. I'm going to hide it some place—that's what.

ALI BABA. Wait a minute, see here. I'd like to see if your lamp works as well as my carpet. My carpet's a wonder, you know. Takes me anywhere. It's really the first flying machine—beats Lindbergh by a couple of thousand years.

ALADDIN. I don't know about that—you got to hand it to Lindbergh. It's too bad about this little woman, though. She *does* seem dead—suppose I— [ALADDIN *rubs the lamp. The* GENIUS *appears out of the folds of the gray curtains. He is dressed in long gray oriental robes, gray turban, gray beard—is infinitely old.*]

GENIUS. Well, Aladdin, what do you want now, always something to disturb a man's rest when he's having a nice little smoke with a houri by the fountain.

ALADDIN. Return this beautiful lady to life! [THE GENIUS *makes a pass with his hands,* BLUEBEARD'S *wife opens her eyes, sits up, sees* BLUEBEARD *on sofa with* ALICE, *runs to him, pulls his beard, slaps his face.* BLUEBEARD *makes a dash for the door and escapes, his wife in pursuit just as* OLIVER TWIST *comes in.* OLIVER *wears ragged shirt, tight trousers half way to ankle, a sharp lock of hair hanging down over a thin pale face, large coarse shoes, no stockings or cap, in fact is dressed like an orphan. He has* THE RABBIT *under his arm, a bowl and spoon in his hand.*]

OLIVER TWIST. Here, Alice, is your rabbit, you should take better care of your pets.

ALICE. Why, Oliver Twist, I do take care of The Rabbit. He's fatter than you are.

OLIVER TWIST. That's so, but you see I'm hungry all the time. I'm hungry now. I always want more. [OLIVER TWIST *sits down on floor by* ALICE, *they play with* THE RABBIT, *he looks anxiously at the table.*] Do you think there will be a birthday cake? [*Enter* HUCKLEBERRY FINN *and* TOM SAWYER *leading* LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD *and* THE WOLF. *Mark Twain's two boys are fat, healthy and jolly in overalls, straw hats and bare feet.* TOM SAWYER *carries a whitewash brush and pail.* HUCKLEBERRY FINN *has a fishing pole, line and a can of angle worms. They are both eating apples.* LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD *is dressed in conventional red cloak and hood and carries a basket. Any kind of wolf will do, there are always plenty to be found scratching at doors.* OLIVER TWIST *eyes the apples so hungrily that* TOM SAWYER *gives him a bite.* HUCKLEBERRY FINN *dangles the angle worms in* ALICE'S *face and she screams.* TOM SAWYER *begins to whitewash the wall.* ROBIN HOOD *comes in with his bow and arrow. He is dressed in green, selects a target and begins shooting arrows into it in a business-like way.*]

TOM SAWYER. Seems to me I've heard of this fellow—he must be Robin Hood the Robber. Where's Friar Tuck?

ROBIN HOOD [*stops shooting arrows and turns to polite*

*conversation*]. The Friar, he's terribly sorry not to come to the party but you see we captured a bootlegger last night in Sherwood Forest and—The Friar's sleeping it off. [CINDERELLA *comes in dressed in rags, carrying a slipper and trailing a little tin automobile just as the clock finishes striking twelve.*]

CINDERELLA. That was a close shave!

ROBIN HOOD. Hello, Cinderella, I heard you had a Rolls-Royce, have you traded it in?

TOM SAWYER. Shucks! Don't you know? When the clock struck twelve her Rolls-Royce turned into a tin Lizzie.

CINDERELLA. I'm afraid I've lost my Prince too. [*Enter* LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY *dressed in curls, velvet and lace.*]

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY. Never mind, Cinderella, I'm going to be a duke some day and I'll take you to a ball. [*Comforts her.*]

HUCKLEBERRY FINN [*goes up and pulls* FAUNTLEROY'S *curls*]. Duke, nothing. Say, Tom, it looks like a girl.

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY. You're those tough boys of Mark Twain's that Dearest told me about. I think I can lick you. [*Punches* HUCKLEBERRY FINN. *They fight, others standing about in a circle.* LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY *is the victor. They get up and shake hands.*]

HUCKLEBERRY FINN. I'll say you can. You're a real kid!

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY. Oh, that's all right. I've always been misunderstood you know. [*Enter* CAPTAIN KIDD *through the window, a red handkerchief bound about his head, fierce mustaches, a knife between his teeth, cutlass in hand and buccaneer boots. Comes in with a terrifying whoop, and a black flag with a death's head.*]

CAPTAIN KIDD. Now, my hearties! Off the yard arm you go. Run up the Jolly Roger. [*They all attack him together, overpower him and make him walk a plank which they place between table and window sill and push him off—there is a loud splash.*]

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY. I never did care much for that chap you know—too rough—

CINDERELLA. Listen! somebody's singing! [*Enter* SILVER, *a jolly old man, carrying a map of Treasure Island and hauling in a chest.*]

SILVER [*sings*].

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest
Yo—ho—ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the Devil had done for the rest—
Yo—ho—ho and a bottle of rum!"

[ALL *together repeat song in chorus.*]

OLIVER TWIST. What's in the chest? Something to eat?

SILVER. Doubloons! Pieces of eight! [*The clatter of a horse's hoofs is heard off stage. Stops suddenly. Enter* PAUL REVERE *in Colonial dress, breathless, wiping his brow.*]

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY. My word, he's in a hurry!

PAUL REVERE. To arms! To arms! The British are coming! [*The* LITTLE BOY'S MOTHER *comes in with a huge birthday cake,* 10 *candles, lighted on it. She sets it on the table, takes a knife, prepares to cut it.*]

OLIVER TWIST. Is it real? Can we eat it? [*Just as the* LITTLE BOY'S MOTHER *starts to cut the cake, the room grows suddenly dark, the gray curtains of the rear wall are drawn together. The* LITTLE BOY'S *bedroom gradually grows light.* LITTLE BOY *sits up, rubs his eyes.*]

LITTLE BOY. Gee! That was a peach of a dream! Mother! Mother! [*Enter* MOTHER.] I've had my party—after all— Let me tell you—

[CURTAIN]

NOTE.—This play may be developed more in scope and detail by the children if desired.

# ON THE SHELF *

By

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

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## CHARACTERS

LOVE POEMS, *the Author's first book*

THE MARQUIS
THE WIDOW
1ST VIRGIN
2ND VIRGIN
BOOZOM
THE NEW ONE
} *Characters in the Author's novels*

SMITH, *the Author*

# ON THE SHELF

*The scene is on a shelf at a public library. When the curtain rises the audience sees a small section of this shelf enormously magnified: the books stand about ten feet high and three feet wide. The backs of eight volumes are visible: they should give the appearance of that dingy brown leather in which library volumes are rebound after seeing considerable service. On the back of each book the title and author's name are lettered in gilt: these inscriptions should be very large, so that the audience can read them easily. The volumes stand erect, tightly side by side, except that at one place there is a gap—evidently one of the books is "out."*

*Projecting in front of the row of book-backs is a brown platform which represents the edge of the book-shelf. This must be raised a couple of feet above the floor of the stage proper, so that the characters may sit there.*

*In each of the book-backs, not noticeable by the audience until used, is built a small door (opening inward, so that no knob is necessary on the outside of the book) by which the characters may emerge from the volumes they inhabit. The titles of the volumes read thus from Right to Left:* "In So Many Words," "My Bosom's Lord," "Solitude," "Put Asunder," "Self-made Widow," "The Trap," "Foolish Virgins," "Marquis of Carabas." *On each book the author's name is written as* SMITH.

*When the scene is discovered there is a brief pause to allow the audience to apprehend the setting; then enters, through the gap in the line of books, Love Poems. She is a slender, dark-haired girl of nineteen or there-*

*abouts, dressed in a simple summer muslin. She should have a rather old-fashioned air, for she is supposed to represent the fashion of* 1899. *She seems agitated, looks along the line of books as though measuring the space with her eye; tries to push some of the huge volumes closer together to make more room in the gap, cannot budge them, and stamps her foot with a gesture of half-angry despair.*

LOVE POEMS. Oh, *dear!* It does seem too bad. [*Enter, through the door in the volume marked* "Marquis of Carabas," *the Marquis himself. It is a polished but rather conceited figure, attired in the court dress of pre-revolutionary France; the typical French nobleman of the costume novel. He makes her a distinguished bow.*]

MARQUIS. *Bonjour,* Mamselle.—Does anything fail you?

LOVE POEMS. Of course, I'm used to being pushed away in the corner; but since the New One came I'm shoved out of sight altogether.

MARQUIS [*looks along the line*]. Dear me! Why, so you are. I hadn't noticed. Couldn't you get in there? [*Points to gap.*]

LOVE POEMS. But if the New One comes in there won't be any room.

MARQUIS. He won't be in. He's one of the Six.

LOVE POEMS [*a little bitterly*]. I suppose so. Is he nice?

MARQUIS. Oh, he's all right of his kind. [*With self-esteem.*] Of course when *I* was published manners were different.—You mustn't be disrespectful to the Best Sellers, my dear. I was one myself, in my day. [*Takes snuff, with an air.*]

LOVE POEMS. You darling!—Yes, Marquis, I know; but it's hard to be the only poetry in the works of a successful novelist.

MARQUIS [*obviously thinking more about himself than about her troubles*]. Well, my child, you *would* slip away

from your own place on the Poetry shelves. Naturally, here among the popular fiction, there isn't much room.

LOVE POEMS. I was so lonely there. I had to come. *You* understand, Marquis, even if the rest don't. I wanted to be near the others who had known *Him,* even if they weren't exactly my kind.—It's hard to explain . . . but you see I was his first—

MARQUIS [*a trifle impatiently*]. Yes, yes, Mamselle. But it's a little awkward—especially to-day— [*He checks himself.*]

LOVE POEMS. You really think I could squeeze in here without being pushed back right away? Oh, it's *so* long since any one took me out.

MARQUIS. I'm sure of it.

LOVE POEMS. Then I *will!* [*He watches her with a sort of pitying affection as she runs back into the darkness behind the gap. Then he taps gently with his cane at the door in the volume marked* "Self-made Widow." *A lady in stylish mourning of very modern mode, rather emphatically made up and excessively soignée, appears from the book.*]

WIDOW [*breezily*]. Hullo, Mark! What's up?

MARQUIS. Madam, your adorer. [*He kisses her hand.*] Have you heard the news?

WIDOW. Don't tell me you're going into the movies? My dear old thing, that costume stuff is absolutely *out.*

MARQUIS [*gravely*]. The Author is dead.

WIDOW. My God! Smith?—[*Looks at her costume.*] Well, anyway, I won't have to buy mourning.

MARQUIS. We're going to be tremendously busy. There's to be a Memorial Edition, with new illustrations. You ought to see what the newspapers say. "The greatest popular romancer of his time." "Creator of enduring types of human frailty"—

WIDOW. New illustrations? Well, I hope they get a better artist this time. That other fellow never did me justice—

MARQUIS. And I'm going to be translated into French. Think of it, a chance to see Paris at last!—I always believed, you know, that I was one of his favorites—

WIDOW. Does Love Poems know? Poor kid, this'll hit her hard. You know she still takes Smith seriously—

MARQUIS. I didn't have the heart to tell her.—Besides, she won't get into the new edition. It's just the novels. [*Enter, from the volume marked* "Foolish Virgins," *two typical young flappers. One of them is smoking a cigarette.*]

1ST VIRGIN. Hullo, Marky! Morning, Widow. What's all this about Smith croaking?

MARQUIS [*with distaste*]. You should know by this time, Mam'selle, *c'est défendu de fumer* on the shelves.

2ND VIRGIN. If you ever *do* get to Paris, Marky, you'll have a nasty time with that French of yours. Poor old Smitty, his French was a scream.

WIDOW [*to the girls*]. Don't tease him; this is serious. [1ST VIRGIN *extinguishes her cigarette.*]

MARQUIS. Yes, *mes enfants,* our creator is dead. It is a Serious Loss to Literature.

1ST VIRGIN. Good thing, too. He left *us* high and dry: bobbed hair, short skirts, rolled hose, gin flasks, all that tripe; and now look at us. We're absolutely *dated.*

2ND VIRGIN. And the pleated skirts they're wearing in the new novels are simply corking.

WIDOW. Never mind. We're going into an Edition de Luxe.

1ST VIRGIN. What ho! We'll get some decent quarters at last.

MARQUIS. I want to get a new snuffbox before we go to press.—*Ma chérie,* may I escort you anywhere?

WIDOW. Well, Mark, if you're going toward the Avenue I need some stockings myself. [MARQUIS *and* WIDOW *exeunt, left.*]

1ST VIRGIN. Let's drag out old Boozom and kid him along. [*They run over to volume* "My Bosom's Lord"

*and hammer on the door. It opens and there enters a Manly Man of the Richard Harding Davis era, in Virile War Correspondent garb: flaring riding breeches, polo shirt open at the collar, silk handkerchief knotted round throat, pith helmet, boots and spurs, revolver holster, field glasses slung over shoulder, very evident notebook and pencil.*]

2ND VIRGIN. Hullo, Boozom! How's the old Best Seller?

BOOZOM. I say, what's all the tumult? Have the Japs crossed the Yalu?

1ST VIRGIN. Worse, much worse.—Smith's dead.

BOOZOM [*takes his helmet off*]. He was a brave man.—By Jove, I must get this news off to the old sheet at once. Where's the nearest cable office? [VIRGINS *cackle with enjoyment.*]

2ND VIRGIN. Boozom, you're priceless. I'll bet they fell for you hard in 1905.

1ST VIRGIN. This way to the cable. You can blow us to a haircut for the new edition. [*They drag* BOOZOM *off, right. There is a scuffling sound, and* LOVE POEMS *reappears in the gap, dragging her book. It is much smaller and thinner than the others—perhaps seven feet high and two feet wide: mounted on small casters so that she can move it. Instead of the brown library binding it is colored a dainty white and gold, with scrolls and gilt flower-designs on the cover. It is lettered* "Love Poems—Smith," *and at the bottom of the back-piece the date* 1899. *She is, with difficulty, pulling it into the opening, when the New One enters left. He is a well-dressed man of thirty, with an air of breeding and comfortable circumstances, but betrays a rather cynical assurance and self-certainty. He hastens to her assistance.*]

NEW ONE. Let me give you a hand. [*Pulls the book forward into line.*]

LOVE POEMS. Thank you ever so much.—There: some one ought to be able to see me, if I don't get pushed back again. [*She darts inside the little volume, and reappears*

*with a feather duster, with which she begins to dust the back of the book.*]

NEW ONE [*looking around*]. Where are all the rest of them?

LOVE POEMS. Oh, you see there aren't ever more than a few on the shelf at once. The Smiths are so popular. That is, most of them are.

NEW ONE [*looking at her intently*]. Please don't think me rude; but have we ever met before?

LOVE POEMS [*shyly*]. I—I don't think so. You see, I don't go out very much.

NEW ONE. But I believe we have. . . . I didn't exactly *meet* you, but I saw you. I remember where—In the mind of the Author.

LOVE POEMS. What do you mean?— Good heavens!— Are you the New One? [*He bows.*] And I've been pushing myself into your place—

NEW ONE. Please don't give it a thought. I'm going to be terribly busy, I sha'n't be here at all. I just stopped in to look around.

LOVE POEMS [*in a low voice*]. And he still thinks of me?

NEW ONE. He *did.*

LOVE POEMS. Did?

NEW ONE. Haven't you heard? He's dead. He died this morning.

LOVE POEMS [*slowly as though dazed*]. Dead . . . [*Lets her duster fall and comes forward blankly.*] Oh, how cruel. And he never wrote it. [*She sits down on the edge of the shelf and buries her face in her hands.*]

NEW ONE. Look here, you mustn't be so upset. Think what a success he had. There's going to be a Limited Edition, too.

LOVE POEMS [*vehemently and furiously*]. Oh, *don't* talk like that, I can't bear it. It *is* cruel. He never wrote the great book he used to dream about.

NEW ONE. Oh, I don't know. He did pretty well. Have you read—hem—have you read *me?*

LOVE POEMS [*with sudden hopefulness*]. Yes, perhaps I'm unfair. Tell me about the New One. And tell me about *Him*. How was he when you were there?

NEW ONE. He seemed all right. Of course, I wasn't there very long. But Miss Edwards said she had never seen him more productive.

LOVE POEMS. Productive . . . that's a queer word.—Who's Miss Edwards?

NEW ONE. His secretary. He used to dictate to her.

LOVE POEMS. He didn't dictate when I knew him. You can't dictate poetry. Well, tell me about the story. Are you happy?

NEW ONE. Happy? My dear child, it's a *modern* novel.

LOVE POEMS. Married?

NEW ONE. Well, yes, part of the time.

LOVE POEMS. Any children?

NEW ONE. Really, that seems very irrelevant.

LOVE POEMS. What's your wife like?

NEW ONE. Why, she's rather stunning; but I don't see her again after the Fourth Chapter. You see we're not exactly congenial—

LOVE POEMS. I'm afraid you're not what he used to dream about. He talked of writing a book—oh, a *big* book, a book that would be generous and brave and understanding—a book that people would be glad to live in. Just look how he's botched it. [*Gestures to the books behind them.*] All these poor creatures, they aren't real at all. They're only unhappy caricatures, all pining to get out of their books because they don't feel genuine. They all imagine, poor dears, that if they were in one of the other books they'd be so much more comfortable. Look at the poor silly old Marquis, in that big book full of people and yet so lonely: lonely because he doesn't know what's the matter with him. And the Widow, locked up with that awful ex-husband of hers, eating her heart out to be in the same story with the Marquis. And all the rest of them, poor puppets. It wasn't fair. The Author took advantage of

their helplessness.—Perhaps I'm in the wrong book myself. Perhaps I should have been written by some one else. Oh, why did he do it?

NEW ONE. I'm awfully sorry: you'll have to excuse me. They're waiting for me at the Circulation Desk—It's been a great pleasure, I'm sure . . . [*He bows himself out, left. During* LOVE POEMS' *last speech a shy-looking little man of fifty, with spectacles, smoking a pipe, rather carelessly dressed in Norfolk jacket and cap, has wandered quietly in, right. This is* SMITH, *the Author. He is strolling along the line of books, with somewhat the air of one on a holiday. He quietly pushes open the doors in the book-backs and peeps inside, then closes them softly. He has reached the* "Love Poems" *volumes before she notices him. He stands gazing aborbedly at it, puts out his hand as though to open the door, and then hesitates.* LOVE POEMS, *seeing him, rises and hurries to pick up her duster.*]

LOVE POEMS. I'm afraid it's a little dusty. I was just cleaning up.—Were you looking for anything special?

SMITH [*politely pocketing his pipe and removing his cap; he looks at her sharply*]. I was looking for a good book.

LOVE POEMS. What do you mean by a good book?

SMITH. Well . . . an honest book. A . . . a comfortable kind of book. I'll tell you the truth. I've got a long holiday, and I want a book to live in.

LOVE POEMS [*thoughtfully*]. I hope you'll choose the right one. You see, once they put you into a book you can't get out of it. You just have to make the best of it.

SMITH. I want to find one where there'll be congenial company. Tell me about this man Smith. Are the books really worth while?

LOVE POEMS. They've been very popular. But it isn't fair to ask *me*. I'm one of his people, you see, so I'm prejudiced.

SMITH. Which story are you in?

LOVE POEMS. I'm not a story at all. I'm poetry. I don't really count, I guess. I'm Out of Print. Most of his

readers don't even know I exist.—I'd rather not talk about it, please. He died this morning, and I've only just heard. [*She dusts, to conceal her feelings.*]

SMITH [*after a pause*]. It's rather odd, your being here among the Fiction.

LOVE POEMS. It isn't odd at all. I guess you don't know much about libraries. Why, the shelves are just swarming with characters trying to get into the books where they feel they belong. Sometimes it's very embarrassing for the librarians. Becky Sharp, for instance—did you know she fell in love with the Master of Ballantrae? The other evening they found her on the Stevenson shelf, in negligee. They had a terrible time hushing it up. She absolutely refused to leave the book. It was a scandal.

SMITH. I don't blame Becky. I'd like to live in that book myself.

LOVE POEMS. If Authors knew the heartburnings of people who are put into the wrong books, they'd be more careful.—Are you a character from a story?

SMITH. I'm a character from a story that never got written.

LOVE POEMS. Really? How thrilling! Do tell me about it. [*They sit on the edge of the shelf.*] Oh, if Smith had only written the book he always intended to write!

SMITH. You seem to know a lot about Smith.

LOVE POEMS. Why shouldn't I?—Do you know why I ran away from the Poetry shelf where I was lonely and forgotten? I wanted to be near these others whom He had created: to see if they were the beautiful living creatures he used to dream of.

SMITH. And were they?

LOVE POEMS. No. They were poor images, phantoms, dolls dressed up in the passing fashion of the day. I was lonelier than ever, for I couldn't hear in them even an echo of Him.

SMITH. Perhaps he intended them to be that way. We all have to be ourselves, you know. We can't just be

echoes of the Author.—Perhaps being an Author is harder than you think.

LOVE POEMS [*thoughtfully and slowly*]. Perhaps it is.—Perhaps it is. Yes, it isn't fair. The Author has us at His mercy. He makes all the rules. We can't help ourselves.—You didn't tell me about the story you come from.

SMITH. It's a story about a poet.

LOVE POEMS [*eagerly*]. The nicest kind of story!

SMITH. But he only wrote one book of poems, long ago. Then he wrote other things, novels, which were so successful he never went back to poetry.

LOVE POEMS. That was cowardly.

SMITH. Not necessarily. That little book of poems was a secret between him and the girl he wrote it for—the girl he put into the book.

LOVE POEMS. But wasn't she lonely, if he never went back to her?

SMITH. Secrets are always lonely. If a lot of people know about them, they're no longer secrets.

LOVE POEMS. How does the story go on?

SMITH. He put her into a book, and there she stayed: always young, always lovely, always unspoiled, just as she was when he first knew her.—Did you ever think, that is the only way a woman can keep young, by having a poet fall in love with her?

LOVE POEMS. There aren't enough poets to go round.

SMITH. Oh, yes, there are, if each one falls in love with enough women.

LOVE POEMS. You're being cynical.—But what good does it do her if she stays young all alone? If he goes away and she never sees him again?

SMITH. Let me finish. The poet invented pet names for her. He used to call her The Dark Lady of the Sonnets—

LOVE POEMS [*fiercely*]. Don't tell me any more. You're tormenting me. Some of those odious people have been telling you about me. They all make fun of me and pretend to be sorry for me. Oh, I believe I'm *glad* He's dead.

I wouldn't want to see Him again. He went away and became Famous. I hate famous people. They belong to everybody. I wanted the boy, the boy who belonged only to me.

SMITH. My dear . . . my everlasting dear . . . here he is. [*She gazes at him, aghast; and then realizes it is indeed He. He puts his arm around her, and with a little sigh of contentment she silently puts her head down against his shoulder. Then, with a sudden revulsion she starts away and rises to her feet.*]

LOVE POEMS. But this is impossible. You're dead.

SMITH [*slowly and tenderly*]. My dear, when an author dies they punish him by making him go to live in one of his own books.—But they let him choose the one he likes best.

LOVE POEMS. Oh, you must choose one of the novels. The Limited Edition is going to be wonderful, and you'll be more comfortable there. The old Marquis, for instance: he's such a darling, and very amusing company—

SMITH. The Marquis? Pooh! I stole him straight from Dumas. No, my dear, there was another Limited Edition—very limited! How many copies was it? Five hundred?

LOVE POEMS. Only three hundred.

SMITH. That poet was only a boy, you know; and it wasn't great poetry. But perhaps I'm glad it wasn't, because no one remembers it now but us. How did that one go? [*He recites from memory:*]

> All lovely things conspire to greet
> My lady: daisies at her feet
> Sprang white, and wistfully implored
> Her plucking; and with one accord
> The sunsets for her smiles compete.
>
> The stars . . . the stars . . .

[*He pauses, trying to remember.*] Damn, I've forgotten it!

LOVE POEMS. I know it. Haven't I lived with it all these years?

> The stars in many a silver fleet
> Cruise through the dark, in hopes to meet
> Her eyes, that graciously reward
> All lovely things . . .

SMITH [*eagerly*]. Yes! I remember now—

> All gay and gentle thoughts entreat
> Her favor and approval sweet:
> She finishes, and makes complete
> All lovely things.

[*Reflectively.*] Hmm. Rather juvenile! I believe I could do better now.

LOVE POEMS. But, my dear one—you can't afford to settle down for ever in my poor little book. You're a Great Man now, and worse still, you're dead. You've got to be careful of your reputation. You belong in one of the novels, with the new introductions by critics.

SMITH. I'd forgotten. I was just thinking what fun we'd have rewriting those poems.

LOVE POEMS. You sha'n't touch a word of them.

SMITH [*looking at the line of books, a little wistfully*]. It would be fun to rewrite them all. I didn't realize before what it means to be dead. [*He takes her hand.*] Come, my dear. I know where I want to live. [*He leads her to the door of the* "Love Poems" *volume, and holds it open for her. But just as she is about to enter she turns and looks offstage.*]

LOVE POEMS. Wait a moment! Here come the Marquis and the Widow. They'll want to pay their respects to you.

SMITH. Quick, let's get away before they see us! [*She gives him a hasty kiss, and slips inside the book. He pauses just a moment on the threshold, gives a last look round,*

*and then follows her in. Enter* MARQUIS *and* WIDOW, *left. Both carry parcels, and are in high spirits.*]

MARQUIS. *En bien, ma chérie,* now we are all equipped for our new prosperity.

WIDOW. And, Mark, you old rascal, you never told me that you are going to be Volume One in the De Luxe Edition.

MARQUIS. Enchanting child, I was always a special favorite of the Author's. I remember his saying that he prided himself particularly on me.

WIDOW. And we shall be next door to each other; for I'm going to be Volume Two.

MARQUIS. Ah, *bien adorée,* destiny is sometimes kind to those who have a gallant disposition. It will be strange indeed if there is not some opportunity— [*He sees the feather duster which* LOVE POEMS *has dropped just outside her volume.*] Ah, *pauvre petite,* she has been trying to brighten up her little book. She is so hoping to be included in the new edition. It is rather pathetic, *n'est-ce pas?*

WIDOW. Poor kid. Don't tell her about Smith passing out, Mark. She'll find it out soon enough when they put her back in the Poetry section. By the way, that's good news about the artist.

MARQUIS. My dear, no matter how great he is, he will do us no more than justice. The last thing the Author said was that if anything happened to Him, he wanted *us* to be properly treated. [*He leads her gallantly to the door of her volume, and waves the feather duster at her with a graceful gesture as the curtain falls.*]

# RED CROSS WEEK

# TAKING THE PICNIC TO THE SHUT-IN *

*FOR TEN OR MORE GIRLS*

By

THE JUNIOR RED CROSS

* Used by permission of the American Junior Red Cross.

## CHARACTERS

EDITH
MARGARET
JESSIE
IRENE
FRANCES
ELIZABETH
ANNA
ANNABEL
MARIE
ISABELLA

# TAKING THE PICNIC TO THE SHUT-IN

*Curtain rises on stage set as a bedroom. Bed at right center of stage. Small table near bed at patient's left. Patient in bed in uncomfortable position. Bed very tumbled up and untidy. Patient's right arm is in sling, and hand is bandaged. (Patient's left ankle is bandaged and wrapped in towel with hot water bottle "supposed" to be in place on ankle.) For opening speech patient half raises herself on the pillows so she can be heard by the audience.*

EDITH. Oh, dear, wish something would happen! I'm just sick of staying here all alone. It's a crime to have to stay indoors to-day. I wish we never had come to this old town even if sister does have a better position. I wish I was back in Pleasantville where a feller has friends. I sure do need some friends in this town. Those girls in the Sunday School class looked like they'd be worth knowing, though. Oh, drat it anyway, why did I have to stay in bed to-day! [*Reaches for glass of water—loses balance and spills it on bed.*] Oh, pshaw. [*Buries head in pillows. Knock on outer door. Looking up.*] Mrs. Brown from next door I suppose, coming to see if I want anything. [*Louder.*] Come in.

MARGARET [*off stage*]. Isn't this where Edith Blank lives?

EDITH [*curiously*]. Yes, come on in, I'm in here. [*Enter girls carrying baskets and boxes. Girls stop inside the door, look surprised, and* EDITH *looks mystified for a moment. Smiling.*] Why, hello—my, I am glad to see somebody alive. I've been lying here pitying myself so hard I'm feeling like a regular martyr.

MARGARET. Why, what *is* the matter?

EDITH. I fell down stairs Monday and sprained my wrist and my ankle, and my back feels like at least a dozen ribs are broken, but the doctor says they aren't. I've been just longing for some one to come in this afternoon. Sister had to go down to the office to do some important work for Mr. Sawyer and she just hated to leave me alone.

JESSIE. Well, we sure are glad we came, we are on our way to the woods for a picnic supper and we stopped to ask you to go along. We knew you were a new girl here and thought you needed some friends.

IRENE. Why don't we stay here and have our picnic?

GIRLS [*in unison*]. Yes, let's—why, yes, say, we do! etc.

IRENE. Come on, let's take our eats out to the kitchen. [*Exit. All but* FRANCES *and* MARGARET.]

MARGARET. Edith, you look awfully uncomfortable. I wonder if you wouldn't let us try to make you feel a bit more comfy.

FRANCES. Oh, yes, you must let us. It will be such a fine chance to practice some of the things we learned in our Home Hygiene Class!

EDITH. Home Hygiene Class? What is that?

FRANCES. Why, don't you know?—In connection with our Home Economics in High School we have a lesson every week on how to care for illness in our homes, and how to improvise equipment for use in caring for sick folks. Oh, that isn't half what we learn in class, but it's the Home Hygiene Course planned by the American Red Cross, and taught by our Community Red Cross Nurse. [*Girls remove bed clothes, while* FRANCES *is speaking.* MARGARET *and* FRANCES *on stage.*]

EDITH. I'm so sorry about that sheet. I upset a glass of water just as you girls knocked.

MARGARET. Oh, that's easy enough to change. Can you tell me where to find a fresh one?

EDITH. Right in that lower dresser drawer. You'll find plenty of clean linen. [MARGARET *brings sheet and pillow cases, and she and* FRANCES *change lower sheet. Removes*

*hot water bottle and towels and places on chair.*] Why, you are almost like real nurses.

FRANCES. Oh, we don't know nearly as much as a graduate nurse does, but Miss Bratton says we can change a lower sheet as carefully as any real hospital nurse. Of course, we hate to brag about ourselves, but this is just between friends, you know. [*All laugh.*]

MARGARET [*calls off stage*]. Elizabeth, I wish you'd make a cradle for Edith's foot out of my cake box.

ELIZABETH and ANNA [*from doorway*]. All right, I'll be there with it in a jiffy.

ANNABEL [*coming into room, and seeing hot water bottle on chair*]. Here, let me fill that hot water bottle. [*Goes off stage taking bottle, returning in a minute, screwing the cork on way.*]

EDITH. Why do you twist the bottle that way?

ANNA. To let the air out. It won't feel so heavy if the air is forced out before the cork is screwed in. [*Places bottle over* EDITH'S *ankle, first wrapping it in a towel.*]

EDITH. Why, how much better it feels! It felt so heavy before. [ELIZABETH *enters bringing cradle, and places it.*] Why, what next will you girls think of? Now isn't that an idea! The bed clothes were *so* heavy.

ELIZABETH. We used a box like this for my brother when he had his foot crushed, only we had to get a deep [*measures*] one to cover his big foot. [ELIZABETH *and* ANNABEL *put pillow under the bandaged ankle and finish making bed.*]

EDITH. Why did you put the pillow under my leg?

ANNABEL. To make it feel more comfortable.

EDITH. This sure is fun. I keep wondering and wondering *what* you will do next.

MARIE [*at doorway*]. Say, Edith, do you mind if we knock one side out of this wooden box here in the kitchen?

EDITH. Why, no, of course not, but what on earth do you want with that box?

MARIE. Oh, just wait a minute and you'll see.

JESSIE [*in doorway*]. Anna, they want you and Eliza-

beth to chip some ice for lemonade. We'll prop Edith up for her supper. [ISABELLA *and* JESSIE *enter. Take chair or suitcase and lift patient up and place "back rest" with following conversation.*]

EDITH. Why, I never dreamed you could learn to do all those things in School. I thought the High School in Pleasantville was pretty fine, but our Home Economics course didn't give us all this.

ISABELLA. Oh, this isn't nearly all that we learn in class. We learn how to take a pulse, and read a thermometer, and give medicines and hot and cold applications, and—

JESSIE. Yes, and how to bathe and care for a sick person and care for babies and children, and how to prevent a communicable disease from spreading to the rest of the family—and, oh, I can't begin to tell you all!

ISABELLA. Don't forget too we learn how to care for our own selves so we will stay well, and how to live so as to prevent a lot of sickness.

EDITH. Well, I surely am glad I came here to live, and I'm going to get in on that course in Home Hygiene this fall, sure as you're born. [*Props elbow of arm which is in sling with pillow.*]

MARIE [*in doorway*]. Is the patient ready for supper?

JESSIE. Yes, in a minute. [*Enter* IRENE *with improvised bed table which she places over* EDITH'S *knees. Enter* DELLA *with towel which she places on table, also basin and washes face and hands. Enter* MARIE *with tray, placing on table saying:*] Come on out, girls. Fill up your plates, and we'll come back here to eat.

EDITH [*looking out of window*]. Oh, there comes my sister—won't she be tickled to find me all over my grouches. Girls, this is the nicest surprise I ever had. Hurry back with your eats. [*Girls enter with filled plates and arrange themselves for a picnic lunch.*]

[CURTAIN. *Just as girls are settled in place.*]

# WHAT BECOMES OF IT *

*A PLAY IN TWO ACTS AND EIGHT SCENES*

By

ETHEL BLAIR JORDAN

* Used by permission of the American Junior Red Cross.

## CHARACTERS

FRANCES
MARGERY
ALICE
DRAGA
DWIGHT
SKINNY, *a fat boy*
STUBBY
FRANZ

Albanian, Rumanian, Indian, Austrian, Serbian and Czech and Illinois Children. Teachers, Red Cross relief workers, Professor Cizek, etc.

# WHAT BECOMES OF IT

## ACT I

SCENE: *Ordinary school room, benches, map, blackboard, etc., after school hours. Four boys and four girls lounging on benches talking.* SKINNY *is eating an apple.*

MARGERY. Somebody was asking me just what the National Children's Fund does, and to save my life I couldn't think of anything definite at the minute.

ALICE. Why, Margery! Don't you read the *Junior News?*

MARGERY. Yes, of course, but you know how it is when you try to remember something in a hurry.

DWIGHT. My father says we save and earn the money for the Fund; so, of course, we've a right to spend it as we please, but he wants to know why we keep on sending so much abroad, now the war is over?

STUBBY. My dad says we ought to help our own people.

FRANCES. But we do!

DWIGHT. Besides, it isn't as if we American Juniors were doing the whole thing ourselves. We just give the foreign Juniors a lift over a hard place sometimes, but they do their own work.

FRANCES. Oh, yes! Most of the money we give is to help them carry on things they have already started themselves. And as soon as they are able they help others.

MARGERY. Yes, don't you remember we helped the Bulgarian Juniors to furnish clothes for the refugee children coming in from Greece and Turkey?

FRANCES. Yes, that's a good example, because all we did was to furnish money for materials and the Bulgarian Juniors made the clothes and gave them to the children who needed them.

ALICE. And then the refugee children began making clothes for themselves, you know.

MARGERY. Isn't it funny the way it works, just like an endless chain? Just as soon as we help one set of children they begin helping somebody else. It never stops.

DWIGHT. Well, I *told* dad some of that but I'd like to *do* something that would show him and other people what it means.

DRAGA. Then let's do something to show them.

STUBBY. 'Atta girl, Draga! But what?

SKINNY. Let's have an ice cream supper for the benefit of the Fund.

DWIGHT. Yeah, Skinny, of course you'd think of something to eat!

ALICE. But, Skinny, right now we don't so much want to make money, as to show what we do with our money.

SKINNY [*calmly eating*]. Have a play.

FRANZ. Better still—have moving pictures, each to represent a cause helped by the Juniors.

MARGERY [*doubtfully*]. But we haven't any movie camera.

FRANZ. Oh, that's not necessary. Let Juniors act pantomimes in a frame like they have around a real movie.

FRANCES. But how will we know what each means?

STUBBY. I tell you! Have it like one of those Burton Holmes travelogues—you know—with somebody to describe each picture!

DWIGHT. Oh, boy! That's the dope!

ALICE. Frances, you're the only "writerette" in our collection, so you write the descriptions.

SKINNY. And Dwight, the silver-tongued Boy Orator, will speak them! [*He dodges a wad of paper* DWIGHT *throws.*]

DWIGHT [*laughing*]. I'll get you for that! Why can't a different person describe each picture?

MARGERY. The teachers will help us get it right—costumes and things like that.

DRAGA. Most of the projects are school things, so one schoolroom scene can be used.

MARGERY. And for any outside scenes Franz can paint a back drop with trees and things and we'll use green cheesecloth for grass.

ALICE. I do hope we can make it go. Do you know, I feel that the Fund has done more for me than for anybody we've helped.

DWIGHT. I know what you mean. It makes a fellow quit calling foreigners Wops and Dagos and Chinks when he knows what they're like and what they do and play.

MARGERY. Yes, and then, besides, you write to them and they answer and you feel as if you're all working together.

FRANCES. We must be sure to show how the National Children's Fund helps our own people—like buying material for Indian schools, for instance.

ALICE. We can't show everything it does. Which shall we choose?

SKINNY. School lunches in Latvia. [*All howl in derision.*]

DWIGHT. Skinny's Junior motto is "Fat Childhood the World Over!" Come on, let's tell the others!

## ACT II

*Descriptions of pictures may be recited by* DWIGHT *alone or by various other speakers. All the action of the pictures takes place within a square black frame. To help the moving picture illusion great care must be taken to make all the action as noiseless as possible. There are two basic scenes, the schoolroom and the outdoor scene. These may be altered quickly and easily*

*by adding draperies, flags and a few simple furnishings. The box car in Scene VII may be roughly painted on stiff paper or bristolboard. The sandpile in Scene VI may be dumped on an old rug and dragged on and off the stage. Speaker appears at side of stage before curtain goes up.*

## Scene I

Speaker.

All honor to Albania, the gallant little land!
Though held in thrall for centuries, her native language banned,
She kept her patriot fires bright. Now free and full of joy,
"I want to help my country!" is the cry of every boy.
[*Curtain rises showing boys in Albanian costume at work carving, planing, etc. Albanian flag on wall.*]
And so within this School of Trades we help them to maintain,
They try to help their country with the work of hand and brain.
[*Boys look up and smile.*]

[curtain]

[*Much rustling and bumping is heard from behind curtain while scene is shifted.*]

Speaker. You'll have to excuse a little delay in shifting scenes at first. Everything is going smoothly—

Stubby's Voice [*from behind curtain*]: Where's the pan of paste I put on that bench?

Somebody [*behind curtain*]. Sh!

Margery's Voice. Oh!! Alice is sitting on it!

Alice's Voice. Oh, oh! I—

SOMEBODY. *SH!* [*Voices behind curtain sink to whispers.*]

## SCENE II

*Curtain rises showing schoolroom as in Act I. American flag on wall. American children busily making toys, packing Christmas boxes, etc.*

SPEAKER.

'Twas months before Christmas, but all through the land
The Juniors were making their presents by hand.
With paintbox and jigsaw and needles and beads
They worked on the things that a Christmas box needs.
[*Curtain falls momentarily.*]
The boxes were packed full and labeled and tied
And sent flying off on their long Christmas ride.
By railway and air mail they reached a great ship
And crossed the wide sea. At the end of the trip
[*Curtain rises showing Czechoslovakian children receiving and opening Christmas boxes. Czechoslovakian flag on wall.*]
They gladdened young hearts and made wishes come true.
They cried: "Merry Christmas! We're thinking of you!"
And the Czech children's voices rang out from afar:
"Our thanks for the thoughts and the presents! Nz Dar!"
[*Czech children wave hands and smile.*]

## SCENE III

SPEAKER. The next picture, the Rumanian Health Campaign, shows only a part of the work that is done there. In addition there are clinics and diet kitchens and all kinds of medical supervision. [*Music plays Bonnie Blue Flag.*

*Curtain rises, showing room arranged as health center with scales, charts, etc. Rumanian flag. Red Cross Public Health Service worker stands at table and issues tooth-brushes to group of Rumanian children who march across stage. They line up across stage and begin to brush their teeth in time to the music which plays softly.*]

SPEAKER.

Behold this band of brushers, Rumanian children they,
Who learned from us the Game of Health
That all the Juniors play.
School Nurses and Health Centers
Have made them healthy too,
[*Enter boy with dirty face.*]
They love to show their neighbors what
The Game of Health can do.
[*Dirty little boy sees soap and water held by Red Cross worker and starts to run away. Children grab him and wash his face. Clean and smiling, he joins the brushers.*]
Hooray! Hooray! For happy, healthy days!
Hooray for the jolly Health Game
That every Junior plays!

## SCENE IV

SPEAKER.

In the country of the prairies,
In the ancient Indian country,
Dwells a race of forest people.
Through the mist of alien customs,
Mute, their old men gaze upon us.
But the eager hands of children
Thrust aside the Veil of Strangeness,
Clasp the hands held out to meet them.
[*Curtain rises showing room hung with Indian rugs and blankets and decorated with Indian pottery. Group of Indian girls at work around weaving*

*frame. Teachers point to weaving and talk to girls in dumb show. Some Indian boys working on poster.*]

SPEAKER.

Then our teachers skilled in handcraft
Taught them weaving and designing.
How to weave in colored patterns
Myths and legends of their people.
Taught them health and games and laughter,
Till they cried in joy and friendship:
"Gladly will we serve beside you!
Gladly march as Red Cross Juniors!"
[*Indian boys hold up Junior Red Cross poster.*]

## SCENE V

SPEAKER.

Vienna, glad to give her children bread,
Had little left to feed their half-starved minds.
They sat in schools and learned long tasks by heart,
With wistful dreaming gaze upon the sky
And thoughts adrift upon some far white cloud.
Then came a man who knew just how to help.
He made a place where any child might come
[*Curtain rises showing room with Austrian flag. Children scattered about, sewing, drawing, modeling in clay, painting, carving. A man moves slowly around, looking at this one's work, patting that one's shoulder encouragingly. Several children idly dreaming.*]

SPEAKER.

And work to give his vague dreams form and life.
Among them moves this leader, Franz Cizek,
Approving many, criticizing few,
But altering not a single hue nor line.
Not striving to make artists of them all,
Only to brighten and enrich their lives.

### Scene VI

Speaker.

On a mountain-top of Serbia
Overlooking Belgrade town
There are thin-faced little children
Who are growing strong and brown.
They were dying in the cities for the lack of light and air
Till we helped the Serbs to send them
To the sun and winds up there.

[*Curtain rises showing outdoor scene. Group of small children playing in sandpile with buckets and shovels. Serbian flag stuck in middle of sand pile.*]

Speaker.

Oh, the mountain winds at play
Blow the troubles far away,
As the children take the Path of Health
Across the sunlit day!

### Scene VII

Speaker.

The twilight came in wonted calm and quiet
Upon the Illinois town. The lights
Shone cheerily from curtained windows where
The mothers tucked their children safe in bed.
Oh, little homes, beware! At dead of night
A fearful Presence strides across the plains.
Bewildered, half-aroused, they heard the sound:
The ominous low moan: the rising roar:
And then the smashing impact of the storm
Crashed down upon them like the crack of doom!
Vainly they clung to strong, familiar walls.
Vast elemental forces shrieked abroad:
Gigantic hands tore man-made walls apart
And dashed them, wrecked and ruined, on the blast.

It passed; the day dawned wan and desolate;
Bleak ruins lay where happy homes had been.
Blank silence reigned, save for the piteous sound
Of little children crying in the dawn
For homes and mothers they would see no more.
[*Curtain rises showing Red Cross nurse with children in arms. In the background a box car used as a temporary dwelling. Relief workers feeding children or playing with them or teaching them.*]
Then came the greatest mother in the world,
Gathered the homeless children to her heart
And laid her healing hands upon their hurts.

[CURTAIN]

*Sounds of whispering from behind curtain. A terrific thump, followed by a yell.*

SKINNY'S VOICE. Ouch! My toe!
SOMEBODY. *Sh!*
SKINNY'S VOICE. He dropped the box car on my—
[*Gurgles as if mouth was stopped.*]
SPEAKER [*hastily*]. The next picture represents—

## SCENE VIII

*Curtain rises on outdoor scene. Enter child wearing a red, white and blue scarf, carrying an American flag in one hand and a large placard bearing the words* AMERICAN JUNIOR RED CROSS NEWS *in the other.*

SPEAKER. One Junior magazine moving on before helped to start some others. Then there were four. [*Enter three more children whose placards read, "Czechoslovakian Lipa," "Austrian Junior Red Cross Magazine," "Canadian Junior," carrying their respective flags and if possible in the costumes of their countries.*]

SPEAKER.

Four Junior magazines in a thriving state.
Four new ones joined them. Then there were eight.
[*Enter four more children whose placards read Hungarian, Italian, Jugoslav, Bulgarian, Junior Red Cross Magazines, and carrying flags, etc.*]

SPEAKER.

Eight Junior magazines growing big and strong.
More countries fell in line till twelve marched along.
[*Enter four more children whose placards read Rumanian, Australian, New Zealand, Polish Junior Red Cross Magazines, carrying flags, etc.*]

SPEAKER.

Twelve Junior magazines, grown beyond a score.
[*Enter twelve or fourteen or fifteen more whose placards read Belgian, Lithuanian, Siamese, Swedish, Esthonian, Latvian, British, Greek, French, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish Junior Magazines. Besides, a tall boy should represent* HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE, *and a little girl or boy Czechoslovakia's "Joy," the Czech Junior Magazine for little folks.*]
Compassing the world to-day, read on every shore.
[*Magazines march across stage so that every placard may be easily read, then line up and have a flag drill, or sing the Junior World Song, or repeat the Junior Creed.*]

[CURTAIN]

# A CLOSE CALL *

By

GEORGE A. MUSE

* Courtesy of American National Red Cross, First Aid and Life Saving Service, Washington, D. C.

## CHARACTERS

Fritzie
John
Ben
Bill
Doctor

# A CLOSE CALL

A dramatic presentation of First Aid, Safety and Health Education Instructions, and Harvey K. Brown.

We are going to show a room in a busy city with two young men keeping bachelor's quarters—John Carter and Ronald Fritz. They will be assisted by Benjamin Bill, Jr., and William Fritz.

Ronald, or Fritzie as we shall call him, will play the part of a careless, indifferent sort of a chap with an "I should worry" air. His main ambition in life so far has been to beat time clocks, get his three square meals every day, and last but by no means least, to crowd into each twenty-four hours as much sleep as he possibly can.

Now his room-mate and chum—John Carter—is the exact opposite. He is an energetic, ambitious, up and coming young man. He is on the right track and is getting ahead in this life.

They have been rooming together for five years and in all this time, both by good deeds and good words, John has been trying to make Fritzie see his errors and assume a different attitude toward life. But so far he has had no success and is well nigh discouraged. He has threatened on numerous occasions to get out and room by himself, but there is a real affection for Fritzie that holds him from doing this.

Despite all these good words; despite all the good deeds; it takes "A Close Call" to-night to make Fritzie realize there is something in this life besides a maximum of eating; a maximum of sleeping; all with a minimum of working; and that there is something to our Safety Work besides the mere listening to our Safety Man lecture.

What "A Close Call" is, I am not going to tell you. But within the next fifteen or twenty minutes you will see for yourselves, and we hope that you will like it.

## PRESENTATION

FRITZIE *walks into room in working clothes—takes off coat and hat—throws them carelessly across a chair—lights a cigarette and throws the match on the carpet. He then sits down in a chair—yawns—and starts reading the* Police Gazette. *One minute later—*JOHN *steps smartly in whistling a tune. Removes his coat and hat and hangs them carefully on hat tree, calling out:*

JOHN. Hello, Fritzie, how's everything going?

FRITZIE. Pretty good, John. I came home early to-day. Didn't feel like working after that party last night, you know.

JOHN. Yes, from all reports it was some party, all right. I should think you would cut it out, Fritzie. You know your Boss told you last week if you stayed out any more he was going to fire you.

FRITZIE. Yes, I know it. That's why I reported to-day and stayed 'til 2 o'clock. Gee! What a head—couldn't stick it out another minute so told him I was sick. He let me go. Guess I did look sick, too, for he told me I looked bad to him.

JOHN. Say, Fritzie, I'm in a hurry to-night. Have to go to school, you know. Wish you would get supper ready. Gee! but it's hot in here; guess I'll turn off the heater. [*Turns it off.* JOHN *then starts to take off his coat, collar, and tie preparing to wash. He pours out water from pitcher.*]

FRITZIE. What's the use of turning the heat off? You know we don't have to pay for it. Might as well get the benefit of all the heat we can. I don't feel any too hot. Of course, it's warm, but that's the way I like it. I don't want to freeze.

JOHN. Freeze! You won't freeze in here; you will most likely bake.

FRITZIE. Bake! Ha! Ha! Well, we didn't bake last night. Believe me, when I got up to shut the window it was cold enough. I wish we could sleep in here with our windows closed these cold nights. It's an awful job crawling out in the morning when it's so cold.

JOHN. Why, it's not healthy sleeping in a room with the windows closed. Why, it's not healthy staying in a room as hot as this one is either.

FRITZIE. I've been here all afternoon. Guess it didn't hurt me any—I'm still living. [JOHN *pours out more water.*]

FRITZIE. Say, all I do is fill that pitcher with water. I don't know why you want to wash again. If I had an easy, clean job like yours, I'd wash once a day—that's all.

JOHN. Washing once a day wouldn't keep any one clean. We ought to wash at least before every meal—our hands, anyway.

FRITZIE. Well, all I want is the grub— I'll never refuse to eat it because my hands are dirty. I never wash noons before eating.

JOHN. Don't you fellows ever have any instructions on Health?

FRITZIE. Sure, but the gang I'm with have something to do besides attend those classes. We make believe going, but instead we get over in the washroom and have a game of poker. Say, John, that reminds me—fix up my room rent with the landlady to-night, will you? I got hit heavy in the game yesterday—lost almost all I had.

JOHN. Look here, Fritzie, poker and parties are just what's keeping you out in the yard, don't you know that? And another thing, your carelessness and indifference are going to get you in a peck of trouble some day, you mark my words. [JOHN *puts on a clean collar and his tie.*]

FRITZIE. Well, I've got to have a good time once in a

while, haven't I? What kept you so long? I was just going to have a nap when you came in.

JOHN. Oh, I had to stay late. We had a Safety Meeting and received our final instructions on Prone Pressure. I did not want to miss that.

FRITZIE. Prone Pressure gives me a pain. What's the use of wasting your time on that—you couldn't save any one if the chance did come. But, John, guess you will have to get supper to-night, though. I was kind of shaky to-day and cut my finger on a rusty nail. [*Exhibits finger.*]

JOHN [*examines cut*]. I'll say you did cut it. What did the foreman say?

FRITZIE. Foreman! Say, do you think I'd report to the foreman for anything like that? I should say not. I've been cut many times and never have made out a report yet. Suppose we will have some of that Prone Pressure stuff soon, ourselves. Well, if we do it will be a chance for me to kill another hour or two, so I should worry.

JOHN. Believe me, Fritzie, it's great! [*Starts walking toward* FRITZIE.] Let me show you how it works.

FRITZIE. Nothing doing! Make it some other time. Don't bother me now.

JOHN. Why, if I had known how to apply Prone Pressure last summer, I think I could have pulled Jack through the time he got drowned while we were on our vacation.

FRITZIE. That's all bunk! Prone Pressure would have never pulled him through anyway. Why, he was in the water five minutes before you finally got him.

JOHN. Well, I've always felt I could have saved him if I had known just what to do.

FRITZIE. No, John, Jack's time had come, that's all. If Prone Pressure is such a wonderful thing why didn't that doctor start something? He was a smart fellow. You know they don't pass anything like that by if it is good.

JOHN. Well, Fritzie, the doctors don't know everything. Lots of them have studied this Prone Pressure and more are learning about it every day. Of course they can-

not all learn about it at the same time, but there's a time coming when they will—you wait and see.

FRITZIE. Well, if it's so good a thing they would have had it by now. Guess I'll not eat to-night. You will have to do your own cooking. I don't feel like working, me for the sheets early.

JOHN [*looks at his watch*]. I won't have time to cook and eat so I'll have to drop into a restaurant for a bite to eat on my way to school. Have only a half hour to get there, you know. [*Finishes dressing after washing.*]

FRITZIE. What's at school to-night? More Prone Pressure and First Aid?

JOHN. No more to-night. Taking a foreman's course. I've got to eat anyway, so I'm leaving. So long, Fritzie.

FRITZIE. So long, John.

JOHN [*hand on knob*]. Fritzie, you better start that heater a little later. It certainly is cold out to-night. I'll bet it hits 10 below before morning.

FRITZIE. All right, John, don't worry. We will have heat so long as the —— Gas Light Company is on the job. Our electric lights are all right too. There was a bunch of —— Electric Company linemen working out in front all the afternoon. Say, that's a tough job on a cold day, isn't it?

JOHN. I'll say so—well, Fritzie, see you later. [*Closes door and goes out.*]

FRITZIE [*after* JOHN *leaves*]. John is a great chap but I cannot see where he ever has a good time. All he does is work and study. Ever since he started on Safety work all he wants to talk about is First Aid and Prone Pressure. Well, I never did believe in that kind of stuff. If there is anything the matter with a person, get a doctor, that's my motto. They are the ones that know what to do.

FRITZIE. Gee, but it is getting cold in here now. Guess I'll have a little more heat so long as the Health fanatic has gone. [*Lights the gas heater—hits the gas tube with his foot thereby disconnecting rubber tubing from heater—*

*picks up his magazine again, starts to read and gradually is overcome.*]

*After a lapse of two minutes* JOHN *comes to the room again —enters whistling a tune—smells gas—notices* FRITZIE *and rushes to him—shakes him and calls "Fritzie." Realizing the condition he immediately opens window—shuts off gas at the wall bracket—gets* FRITZIE *all ready for application of Prone Pressure—rushes to door—opens it and leaves it open—calling for* BEN *and* BILL, *then he applies Prone Pressure. About* 30 *seconds later* BEN *saunters in and says, "Did you call me, John?"* JOHN *at once tells him to telephone for* DOCTOR *and* BEN *does, being extremely careful to notify just where the accident has happened, what the nature of it is and how many have been overcome. By that time* BILL *has arrived and the three together work on the patient.* JOHN *still applies Prone Pressure;* BEN *holds out tongue and* BILL *rubs patient's legs toward the heart, stimulating circulation. After about a minute or so* JOHN *and* BILL *change—and this must be done with the minimum of lessening of application—and John then holds the tongue and* BEN *rubs legs. After another minute* BEN *and* BILL *change. This gives all three the opportunity to work on the victim as well as to show that they are equally familiar with just what to do.*

*Perhaps four or five minutes have gone and a rap is heard at the door and the* DOCTOR *arrives. The* DOCTOR *immediately looks over the patient who now shows signs of being practically conscious—tells the men to continue their good work and the patient recovers sufficiently to be moved into bed. Just before his complete recovery and removal to cot, the* DOCTOR *asks for a spoon and a glass half full of water. He has brought some aromatic spirits of ammonia with him (a little water in a medicine bottle) and he measures one-half*

*teaspoonful of ammonia and drops it into water. By this time the patient has entirely regained consciousness and can easily swallow. He drinks this mixture and then the* DOCTOR *asks for a hot water bottle and also for some hot bricks. The gas hose is then connected—bricks brought to gas heater and then the heater is again lighted, after making sure that the connection is tight. Bricks are heated—and these together with the hot water bottle are placed in the bed and the patient moved to it. A dose of one-half teaspoonful of cooking soda in one-half cup of water is given to the victim.*

*The* DOCTOR *sits on edge of cot and facing the audience says, "Well, young man, you certainly have had a 'Close Call' and you can thank your comrades for saving your life. Their knowledge of Prone Pressure and their quickness in applying it is the only reason why you are living right now. If they had waited until I got here it would have been too late. You are all right now, though, thanks to them."*

*The* DOCTOR *then instructs the other men to keep the patient warm—for one of them to sit up with him all night just to see that he is taken care of—to give him a good hot drink of coffee, tea, or milk, if he wants it, and then leaves, bidding them all good night and remarking if they should need him he will be ready to come as soon as they telephone.*

*About one minute after the* DOCTOR *goes,* FRITZIE *says, "I know one thing, fellows, the* DOCTOR *has just told me that I owe my life to you and your knowledge of Prone Pressure and the first thing I do after I get out of bed is to learn how to do it. I'm sorry I ever said it was bunk. Believe me, I can plainly see now that it has been me and not you who has been wasting time. From now on I am going to be a BOOSTER for Safety and Prone Pressure. I only hope I can convince my gang that it is a great thing to know and I guess after they*

*hear what happened to me none of the rest of the gang will need a 'Close Call' to make them realize that we all ought to know everything we can about it.''*

[FINIS]

## EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR SETTING

Small table
Bowl
Pitcher
Towels
Soap
Comb
Mirror

Large table
Lamp and stand
Bulbs for lamps
Magazines
Books

A square of carpet or an art square
Telephone

Fire place and gas heater
Cover
Bulbs and parts for fire place to represent gas glow
Gas heater
Hose for heater

Alarm clock

Hat rack
Pasteboard suit box
2 chairs

Cords
Plugs (Hubbell)

Cot or a bed
Blankets
Pillow
Sheets

Leather bag
Aromatic spirits of ammonia (labeled bottle)
Cooking soda
Bricks
Hot water bag
Cloths
Glass and spoon
Stethoscope

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